'WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH'

The Poetry Review

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Next Issue:

A. E. COPPARD

JOHN SMITH

Results of Four Prize Competitions

TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: IF YOU CAN BUY THE BOOKS THAT ARE PUBLISHED BY OUR ADVERTISERS YOU WILL BE GIVING HELP ALL ROUND

TO OUR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

*

IN YOUR OWN INTEREST READ CAREFULLY –

1. **No manuscripts can be considered** which have not the name and address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. **A self-addressed stamped envelope** must always be enclosed or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
3. One side only of the paper must be used: typescript is preferred.
4. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
5. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
6. Poems over thirty lines in length have a doubtful chance of acceptance.
7. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

THESE PAGES—AN OFFERING TO

Lord Dunsany

. . . to seize some shape we can see,
That others may keep
Its moment of mystery . . .

Prelude: THE LOVELINESS OF EARTH

'After the earthquake . . . and after the fire, a still small voice.' Through all the sabre-rattling across the Seven Seas and the thundering wheels of the gun-carriage; above the snake's hiss of hatred, the groans of pain and fear; speaks the still small voice of Poetry. The death of Walter de la Mare, followed almost at once by that of Lady Dorothy Wellesley, Duchess of Wellington,* must remind many who have hitherto been neglectful that England's greatest heritage is forever expressed through that quiet voice, and move others to their first realization that while Man's inhumanity to Man is bringing the whole world to tears there is a different life going on unceasingly, the life that Lady Dorothy set to poet's music. The simplest of all melodies was hers, 'not zither, viol, wind-instrument, but wind along a willow bent whose leaves turn silver to the wind' (Yeats, people will some day be grateful for your discovery of Dorothy Wellesley):

Lights, colours, trees and flowers,
Ours is the loveliness of earth . . .

*

Among our readers there must be many admirers of *Trees and Life*, the finely-inspired quarterly magazine now in its twentieth year, which belongs to the Fellowship of the Men of the Trees. The founder, Richard St. Barbe Baker, is editor, and in the summer number he quotes the following translation under the heading 'Wisdom from the Past':

I am here upon this earth
To reclaim the Earth
To turn the desert into a Paradise,
A Paradise most suitable unto God
And His Associates to dwell therein.

'Ainyahita wrote this in about 10,000 B.C. She was a shepherdess and the daughter of a shepherd king. She lived in the plains of the Himalayas at the junction of the Brahmaputra and the Tsangpo.'

*

To write of the still small voice of Poetry as we have written above must not mislead anyone into assuming that the attitude of those who heed it is mild, timid, or lackadaisical mentally. From France, for example, comes news that 'the younger French painters do not seem to want to pursue *isms* much farther':

* And, as we go to press, that of C. B. Fry, friend and great lover of Poetry.

> The real importance of French painting at the moment lies rather in its absorption of such ideas into the main tradition. While experimental art slowly peters out, the intelligence and sense of vocation of the French painter either side of thirty is bringing the tradition itself back to life. If one believed that the spectacular, slapdash days of modern art are over, then the French are again leading the way.

America's leading contemporary poet, Carl Sandburg, has ridiculed 'The Abracadabra Boys' in his own art. And a humorous columnist in *The Daily Telegraph*, incredibly perhaps, has lately written the following:

> I have only encountered one solitary man who does not claim to have boozed with Dylan, or fought with Dylan or raised hell with Dylan in one way or another. And the curious thing is that this one solitary man is the only person in the whole sniggering, muck-raking bunch who really knows anything about Dylan, because he's the only one who's read his poems.
>
> He doesn't call him Dylan either. He calls him Dylan Thomas, and I like him very much.

Let the fun continue: 'These are my thoughts on realizing that I am the same age as my father was on the day I was born.' We quote the first verse of a 'poem' by a poet 'in the news.' It is in three lines, each of them ending with what word? No prize is offered for the correct lay-out.

*

'Poems are Good for You.' So *The Manchester Guardian* assures us in its recent announcement of the poetry award, inaugurated by a famous business-firm, for which poets must regard themselves as indebted to our friend and fellow-member, Bryan Guinness. The Guinness Poetry Award of £300, £200, £100 is for the three best poems published *in print* for the first time in Great Britain and Ireland during the year beginning 1st July. The *Guardian* suggests that the judges should *hear* the poems – not to be submitted – as well as see them 'in print': 'The Poetry Society, no doubt, could arrange readings.'

By comparison with poets in other generations, those of to-day are receiving many bounties. Elizabeth Jennings has won the Somerset Maugham Award of £400 for her new book of poems, *A Way of Looking*, published by Andre Deutsch. But only one other poet has won this annual prize in six years.

And here we may remind readers everywhere that work is invited, though one poem only and anonymously, deadline 1st October (not exceeding thirty-two lines), for the Albert Ralph Korn Contest, to honour New York State Poetry Day, 15th October, 1956. Mr. Korn, whose generosity we of The Poetry Society have come to appreciate very highly, offers a cash prize of 100 dollars, and asks that submissions should be addressed to The Director, Lane Van Hook, 154 Pearsall Drive, Mount Vernon, New York.

*

Postscripts. – Poetry Society counsellor Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, at one time British Minister in Montevideo, is adding a collection of autographed memoirs and other works on World War II to a War Memorial Library which he gave to Eton, his old school, in 1938 . . . A long-established and famous literary establishment, The London School of Journalism, has moved to a new address. Delete Gordon Square, substitute 19 Hertford Street, Park Lane, W.1 . . . Last moment news: Mr. Arthur Row, veteran member, has died.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

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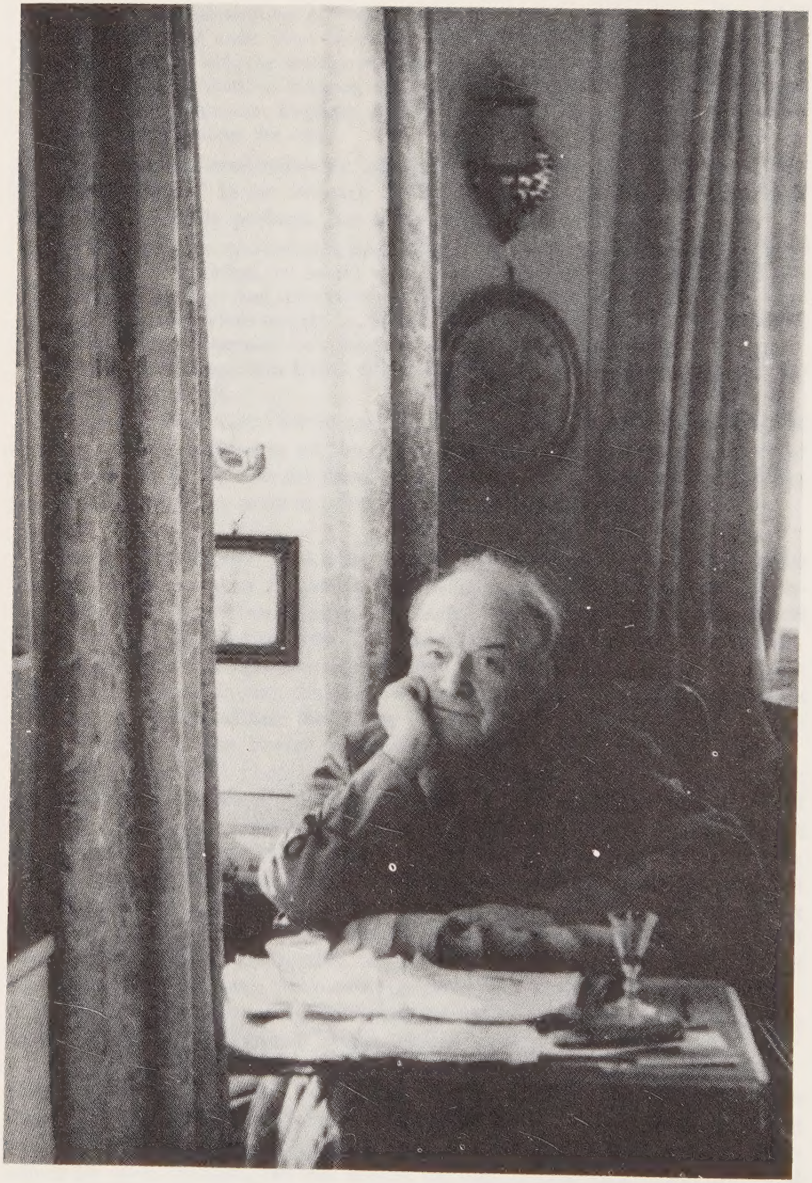

WALTER DE LA MARE – FAREWELL

(A recent photograph by Allan Chappelow, M.A., F.R.S.A.)

IN ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

LORD DUNSANY

Here where we mourn his loss
  Hard by the busy street
Under the golden cross
  Dreamer and soldiers meet.

Here where the years go past,
  Quiet as Thames' stream,
What glory will outlast
  De la Mare's dream?

(This poem was read by the Dean of St Paul's at the burial of Walter de la Mare, on Thursday, 28th June, 1956).

WALTER DE LA MARE, O.M., C.H.

1873 – 1956

JOHN GRADDON

You have gone where the mysteries cluster,
  Clear and alight with life,
  As stars in all simplicity.
You have gone where the deep tide of living
  Meets its purpose, face to face.

You will find yourself at home,
  For always around you were
  The trailing clouds of natal glory.
Immortality was, for you,
  A cloak in life, and now
  A life in death.

Your ashes rest beneath
  A nest of singing boys.
You will remember when
  Your voice rose with theirs.
We will remember
  Your life of singing
  When all else is gone.

WHEN MUSIC SOUNDS . . .

THOMAS MOULT

Chance snatches of a page or two, sudden pictures flashing out from the text before the opportunity has come for a proper reading – how many memories cherished by a bookman must belong to such a prelude! Remembrance of an old volume bearing a title, *The Return,* that signified nothing in the beginning, and an author's name, 'Walter de la Mare', meaning nearly as little at first, brings back to one reader neither the story nor the characters, not even the shrinking, shadowy figure of Arthur Lawford, the stricken man who returned; but just a high room with 'yellowish walls' that was Lawford's refuge for a while during his spiritual (and physical) upheaval: 'the tranquil surge of falling water' heard through windows opening to a fading sunset; and, spread on a small table, 'cups, old earthenware dishes of fruit, and a big bowl of damask roses.'

Again and again has the present writer, hungry for poetry everywhere, reached down this work of prose-fiction among de la Mare's writings if only to renew the satisfaction of perceiving a poet's hand from the outset: 'The churchyard in which Arthur Lawford found himself wandering that mild and golden September afternoon was old, green, and refreshingly still'. But always it is the tranquil water beyond the casement and roses in the fading sunset that are plainest in my anticipation, even as I reach upward to my shelves: and, indeed, whenever the books are recalled that have followed from the same pen, whether in verse or not, the sense of beauty re-awakened is for ever the same – the beauty that the poet assumes to be gone, never simply asleep:

> But beauty vanishes: beauty passes
> However rare – rare it be . . .

Here is the poet's paradox, unknowingly implied – so wistfully and poignantly! – without his realising it. The beauty that passes does not pass! And while the apparent contradiction is resolving itself, correlative lines from de la Mare's poetry are recalled, correlative images invoked:

> There were three cherry trees once,
> Grew in a garden all shady;
> And there for delight of so gladsome a sight
> Walked a most beautiful lady,
> Dreamed a most beautiful lady . . .

Later in the same poem there follows a superb identification: the abstraction, Time, and the tangible, her lover. 'One long summer's day charmed that lady away.' Again the poet has worked his entrancement. Beauty vanishes, beauty passes . . . The theme is restated. And

now the artistic emotion of at least one reader as he thinks comprehensively of Walter de la Mare's poetry has its glowing imagery. Remembrance of sunset roses and falling water, a beautiful lady whose light footstep, ever since one summer's day, seems to wander in dreams . . . these need but a setting, 'a habitation and a name'. We may find all the mind asks for in the most famous of the poems belonging to those early years of an artist – in *The Listeners,* the title-piece of a tiny, cherished volume which, published not very long after *The Return,* is surely one of the smallest ever to have held such great richness! *The Listeners, and Other Poems* has become a scarce book, bound in brown and gold and measuring less than an inch wide on a shelf hardly more than five inches tall; and one well-kept copy is the present writer's treasure to-day, a bookman's treasure that was once a book-*boy's,* well-nigh the first in what might be called his library by courtesy of John Morley, for whom three or four volumes were enough to justify the classification.

> 'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller
> Knocking on the moonlit door;
> And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
> Of the forest's ferny floor . . .

No, there is nobody there; but who that is haunted by the recollection of that beautiful lady, as everybody must be who has taken to heart 'An Epitaph' as well as 'The Three Cherry Trees', does not feel that among the listeners who never made the least stir beyond the moonlit door of the still house was her ghostly presence, and so remains? And the empty house: surely it was not very distant from the tranquil surge of falling water in *The Return*! Dare it be suggested that the house is encountered again in *Motley, and Other Poems,* eight years later? . . .

> See this house, how dark it is
> Beneath its vast-boughed trees! –

The night-wind sighs there:

> Vacancy is all I find:
> Every keyhole I have made
> Wail a summons, faint and sad,
> No voice ever answers me,
> Only vacancy.

The Empty House, the traveller's knock, the ghosts of roses and a lady 'lovelier than all else within it' . . . Beauty vanished, beauty past, again has its symbol, and indeed throughout de la Mare's career of artistic creation the wistfulness and poignancy have lingered like a shadow, though it is never the shadow of melancholy, being cast by a poet who has invariably shown his love of earth and the life of earth. Is it merely fanciful to think that 'To a Candle', written in his

autumn and in its quietly flicking light revealing that 'one I love lies here asleep', is yet another variation on the theme first stated all that long time ago? . . .

> Time hath spread its nets in vain;
> The child she was is home again;
> Veiled with sleep's seraphic grace.
> How innocent and wise a face! . . .
> Lo, she stirs. A hand at rest
> Slips from above that gentle breast,
> White as winter-mounded snows,
> Summer-sweet as that wild rose . . .
> Thou lovely thing! Ah, welladay,
> Candle, I dream. Come, come away!

If fancy is overdone the responsibility cannot be charged against the reader. By virtue of poetry high-placed in Walter de la Mare's generation, certain to haunt future decades of seekers after fine literature as it has haunted several already – by virtue of poetry which has proved unique in a time when first principles are so readily and often glibly put aside, and when the emotional and imaginative appeal is regarded as of less importance than the appeal to the intellect, he has rendered himself liable, being one who works the true magic on his audience – the magic of 'the slipping dream stuff, half withdrawn' . . . Superbly done, moreover. In William Butler Yeats's farewell to the younger Irish poets just before he died they are urged, 'learn your trade' –

> Scorn the sort now growing up
> All out of shape from toe to top.

Walter de la Mare, an English poet, had learned his trade . . . Nor has he ever faltered. His gift ripened to flowering summer, and deepest autumn, yet still rich, abundant with perfectly fashioned roses in the fading sunset.

While this tribute is being written music has sounded, and Walter de la Mare's responsibility for whatever of a life-long devotee's fancy is overdone has support in his lovely confession that 'When music sounds, gone is the earth I know'. So, just as naturally, is it with the rest of us when the music is his own – gone the earth *we* know, gone the brooding dust to which we, as he, have come, and from which we are flown to 'somewhere' (few poets have endowed simple words with the wonder there is in the *somewhere* as he uses it!) 'Somewhere there Nothing is.' So begin the concluding lines of another poem, 'The Tryst', in *Motley, and Other Poems*. Should he have written 'Everything'? For de la Mare, the poet-visionary, at the opposite of life and art to his outstanding contemporary, William H. Davies, explains in *Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination* that 'the visionaries, those whose eyes are fixed on the distance, on the beginning and end, rather

than on the incident and excitement, of life's journey, have to learn to substantiate their imaginings, to base their fantastic palaces on *terra firma,* to weave their dreams into the fabric of actuality. But the source and origin of their poetry is in the world within.'

Somewhere there Nothing is . . . or Everything. Burning dark roses and earthenware dishes, falling water and fading sunsets, a girl asleep by candlelight . . . Be that as it may, 'there, lost Man shall win what changeless vague of peace he can'. Not once in thirty volumes of poetry and prose, matchless since earlier generations, has Walter de la Mare failed to help 'lost Man' to win it.

Editorial Note – 'When Music Sounds' was written for Walter de la Mare on his 75th birthday and included in a Gift-Book which his friends prepared as a surprise. Among the other poets who contributed were Lord Dunsany, T. S. Eliot, Richard Church, Edmund Blunden and Siegfried Sassoon. The two last-named and Thomas Moult became known as *Georgian Poets.* Walter de la Mare was one of the earliest in the team, which was captained by Sir Edward Marsh. Some tributes from our readers are printed elsewhere in this issue.

THE DUSKS OF SPRING

WILLIS EBERMAN

I can remember you least in the spring.
In the summer, yes; and that particular
evening, shaking the snowball tree
above you; you, laughing, covered with white;
the long way home, the flowers gathered:
how tired we were with joy.
Now the earth
turns, has turned, turns many years away
from the laughter, the lost flowers.

The tinge of spring has come back; the
touch of purple and red on the branches.
How is it now I remember so little of you?
Only the hyacinth gathered that single
pungent dusk, on the sloping street; only
the flowers in your hair.

Older, I stoke the fire in the smouldering grate.
The rain strikes down. Far off, the filbert
grove is purpling. The fields are green
brocade, like those long scarves you used to
trail into the dusks of spring.

THE FARM HOUSE

STANLEY STOKES

For centuries it has stood,
Thatched, cob-walled, square,
And watched the changing mood
Of seasons there:
Seen marriages, known mirth,
And death's dark sorrow,
Shared joy when birth
An heir ensured to-morrow.
But, now, all those
It proudly served, have passed:
Into the market-place
It comes, at last.
Its future destiny?
An auctioneer will say:
Perhaps a farm-house, loved,
As it was yesterday,
Or, maybe, petrol pumps
Will mar its walls –
It all depends
Which way a gavel falls.

'DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING?'

A. G. MCL. PEARCE HIGGINS

When you have watched the leaves fall one by one,
  And the days shorten and the hours grow less;
  When all you love slips into nothingness,
And all you strove for, all you did, undone,
What more's to do? Pale leaf and waning sun
  Obey their laws, nor wait one last caress;
  Prayer will not clothe dead trees in summer dress,
Nor faith recall a day whose course is run.
Like one faint candle in the vast of night,
  One grain of gold in all the wide sea sand,
You wait alone, and know that you are right,
  An Athanasius in an Arian land:
This is death's victory and this death's sting,
To be a nightingale that cannot sing.

APPEAL

P. E. DUNN

One song only:
A spun song,
Delicate as the lace-work spiral
Set in a sea-green alley
For boy's treasure
Or old man's pleasure.

Only one song:
Like a spun coin
That glints in the sun
Fresh from the minting.
A young girl's token,
Forever unbroken.

One song only:
Simple and strange,
Like a silver skein
From a bird unseen,
To touch for a moment the heart,
And then depart.

CHOPIN

GEOFFREY TANKARD

The time is past for tears.
From the sighs of melting sound
Removed from arid chord,
Repeating and loving a note again
Bound to your breast and never surrendered
Till merged with ecstasy's pain.
Stabbing discord of poignant tread,
Ripples of transcendent song,
Cascade of a myriad moods,
Image of surrendered bliss,
Why tease my ear with linked alloy
Of faded rapture and defiant cry?

To dance and weep and dream
In solace's flickering shades,
Pour in my veins joy's healing balm
Like shafts that spear the moonbeams
To still the mind in desolation's unquiet hour.
Let my wavering mood heir the beauty
Of music's sad suspense, till vain resistance
Seep into the oblivion of timeless rest.

THIS SHAPE OF GRACE

MURIEL ROOKE

A gleaming shape of grace, piece of old Bristol
Poised on long stem, a wineglass, smooth green crystal:
Gently I lifted it with careful hand,
Held it between me, and the window's band
Of sunset light,
Filling the room before
The fall of night.
As the day died, a prismed world
Glowing like emerald fire
Within its bowl unfurled.
I passed a questing finger round the rim
And my heart lifted as I heard the dim
Responsive hum through velvet dark
That slowly died with colour's burnt-out spark.

I placed a friendship in a room apart,
I held it to the light of passing sun,
It lived and brightened and when day was done
I rang its edge, adventure in my heart
And found response
That kindred tones must hear
In well-met pause
Before the trend is clear.
The twinkling feet of time's resurgent hours
Stir fragrance still from memory's blood-red flowers.
Brittle as glass that splinters at rough touch
Treat friendship gently lest it break as such.

AWARENESS

CATHERINE BLAKISTON

In the poignant moment of release
from loneliness, when it was known
by swift relief of sorrow's ease,
that I was truly not alone –
In that sweet second of no doubt
that swelled the trembling heart with bliss,
came as the softest breeze without,
that touch across my lips – your kiss.

SINE DIE

AUDREY JENNINGS

This is one comfort time confers,
Though other troubles may grow worse,
That passion's eagle shall refrain
From savaging my flesh again
While I – Prometheus to his beak –
Lie helpless on the mountain peak.

And yet – I have not found release;
He hovers to renew the smart;
For even your shadow as you pass
Quickens the beating of my heart.

THE LITTLE SISTERS

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

The Little Sisters of the Poor,
Like small dark Botticelli crows,
Steal time from toil to search for grain
Along the spruce suburban rows.

Begging a feather from Peter's nest
For sorry Paul's unmothered one,
They pause to fondle Mary's cat
Bemused with midday meat and sun.

The Little Sisters of the Poor,
Whose hands, fastidiously clean,
Have cradled many a filthy head
And gentled many a Gadarene,

Do not propound that jeopardy
Beyond our mild, bloom-broidered slope
But as they glean, they sow again,
Soft-sped, their simple thanks for hope.

The Little Sisters of the Poor
Call sometimes on a rainy day;
From silent doors love too must turn,
Re-latch the gate, and steal away.

TIME PAST

GODFREY E. TURTON

Time was, and, having been, it disappears,
Passing irretrievably away,
So we are farther from our yesterday
Than from the utmost stars. The hopes and fears
Which urged us once, the glittering careers
Which beckoned, we in memory survey;
But to that sunlit country never may
We come again, revisit the lost years.

Is nothing left to us of what has been?
Are there not moments which can time outlast,
Which love can with such strength enduring fill
That their impression, grown into the scene
Familiar, less recalls a vanished past
Than in the present lives and happens still?

PELICANS

J. E. M. LUCIE-SMITH

In deserts of the bay
The stylite pelicans
Watch the world pass away.

Each calmly meditates
Perched on a tarry baulk,
Immovable awaits

Answer to solemn prayer
Until a shoal of fish
Glitters in the dull air.

Then the rewarded saint
Is roused, and, taking wing,
With swerve and cunning feint

He stoops above the sea –
No shrill irreverent bird
Could show more cruelty.

ROSE

ENID MADOC-JONES

Sigh the short night away,
Summer rose!
Not where the West wind sways
Comes that faint stirring,
It is your burdened heart
Wrung by its grieving.

What gives the sorrow
That vexes your spirit?
Why should your tenderness
Such sadness merit?
Never was Western sky so deeply stained!
Nor was the evening's star
So proudly raised.

Rose of blood's darkened hue
So purely fashioned,
Death only can assuage
Such grievous passion.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE FLOWERS

F. C. POLLER

There will always be flowers,
Years and rooms brimful.
On sunny windowsills for all to see.
And in the room where no-one goes;
In dark places they will glow.
When flowers are few in garden and hedge
She will find whatever flowers are there.
I shall see spring's primroses the day that they are born,
And summer's flowers will cascade through these rooms.
And when the bistre leaves fall,
And mists cleave to the earth,
Chrysanthemums, season-stained,
Will come in ragged-headed glory.
And from every June to every December
Roses will lean their heads over the bowl's brim.
Whatever life holds
There will always be flowers.

A CHILD READING A POEM

BARBARA GADD

For a day
Unfamiliar words
Charmed her ears.
She neither heard
Shouting nor cries
To come and play.
Above the noise
Shy new birds
Singing fly
In the high winds
Of her childish mind . . .

MATER DOLOROSA

FRANCIS NEWBOLD

I wear the crown all women wear,
  The Crown no other wore;
I bore the child all women bear,
  The Child no other bore.
An unseen splendour plumes my head
  And wings my humble feet;
My soul goes proud and garlanded
  With love most bitter-sweet.
About me broods a mystery
  Of voices and of wings,
As when the angel came to me
  Speaking unsayable things.

Mother of God ! . . . But, when I see
  Mothers of mortal men
Whose lusty childhood, loud in glee,
  Sucks hard at life, and then
Gaze on my own pale, silent Son,
  The destined Crucified,
And know His love will not be won
  By any earthly bride –
Then, though my glory is to rear
  The Shepherd of the sheep,
Dreaming the Cross, the thorns, the spear –
  Forgive me, Lord – I weep . . .

LOVE IS A MANY-SIDED THING

LORD ELTON

For all practical purposes the English language employs only one word, 'love', to describe a dozen very different emotions, for which a dozen different words are needed. The extraordinary poverty in this respect of our native tongue may be partly a symptom of the muddled thinking (or the Grundyish refusal to think at all) of many generations of Britons, but it is certainly also all too frequently nowadays a cause of their misguided action. A linguistic defect has become something like a moral disaster.

Other languages are not so dangerously ill-equipped. The ancient Greeks, for example, had at least five different words, all of which Englishmen usually have to translate 'love'. We speak of the 'love' of Romeo for Juliet (the Greek eros), and the 'love' of Darby for Joan. We speak of the 'love' of devoted friends, such as Ruth and Naomi in the Bible story, for which the Greeks used *philia*. And with us a child 'loves' ice-creams, and 'love' all too often does duty also in the underworld of lust and perversion, where the Greeks employed *epithumia*. And, as if this were not enough, we speak of the 'love' of God for the world, and of the saint for God or his neighbour (for which the early Christians adopted the word *agape*). Clearly, if Romeo and the latest winner of the Dunmow flitch and Oscar Wilde and St. Francis of Assisi can all be said to 'love', no one who uses the word can be certain what meaning he will convey.

Our sadly inadequate vocabulary and the muddled thinking of which it is part symptom and part cause, is undoubtedly making its own contribution to that decline in the respect for marriage and to that widespread breaking up of homes which is at the root of so many of the darkest evils of our time.

A girl arouses in a youth that confused, perturbing emotion which the Greeks called *eros*, and which consists in no small part of physical desire, though strands of deeper emotions, more placid and more lasting, will be latent beneath the surface excitement.

Accustomed to think of all his conflicting emotions as 'love', the young man identifies them all with *eros*, just now their most obvious embodiment, which the comic strips may have encouraged him to think of as 'romance'.

Now *eros* was designed by Providence as the potent force of attraction, drawing lovers together, and returning intermittently throughout their lives, but intended not to persist indefinitely but rather to yield

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gradually and insensibly to far deeper and more enduring emotions. But when the young husband, who has been taught by popular literature to think of all love as *eros*, finds unexpectedly that *eros* is beginning to fade he is apt to feel cheated; he is no longer 'in love' and in the moral climate of to-day he will too frequently feel justified in disregarding the vows which he made under circumstances of the utmost conceivable solemnity, and breaking up his marriage.

But true 'love' is compounded, from the first, of all the varied elements for which, in popular usage, we have no words.

From the very first there is not only *eros*, but what the Greeks called *philia*, the love of comrade for comrade. And from the very first there should be that tenderness or loving-kindness, which the Greek of the New Testament calls *agape*, and which is perhaps the deepest and most powerful of all the elements in love.

For as the poets have reminded us, love is closely akin to compassion. First love, with *eros* as its principal component, may be chiefly a breathless, uncritical admiration. But though the admiration should endure, how much of our deepest and most enduring love, for husband or wife or child, proves on analysis to spring from compassion – because the loved one is in pain or unsuccessful or disappointed or merely, like all human beings whom we intimately know, full of touching and pathetic absurdities!

Clearly *agape*, so defined, is closely akin to the protective instinct of the man, and the maternal instinct of the woman; but this is only to remind ourselves once more that in the spectrum of love there are infinite gradations, so that to think of all without differentiation as 'love' is as misleading as it would be to speak of blue and green and red, and every subordinate shade of them, indiscriminately as 'colour'.

Marriage as it was meant to be grows steadily to incorporate all these varied elements in ever deepening degree.

In the very first days and weeks there will be *philia*, the love of friends, born of shared interests and experiences and anxieties. And from the first too there will be that profound tenderness, protective or maternal in character and born of the deep, compassionate desire to defend the loved one against the manifold and ever impending perils of human existence. The words 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health' in the Anglican marriage service are a reminder of a profound truth.

For if there were no risk of worse as well as of better, of poorer as well as of richer, of sickness as well as of health, love would be infinitely impoverished. Fittingly enough, the tales of the loves of the immortals, immune from disaster and death, in Greek mythology are concerned with little more than casual lust.

In a true love story none of love's elements will disappear finally and for ever, and there will be no sudden lacuna.

Rather, there will be a continuous change, as the deeper and more gradual growths of the tree of love overtake and overshadow that which grows more swiftly and is less deeply rooted. Needless to say, there may be moments in the early chapters of the story when patience or understanding or forgiveness are needed, and when those who have not been brought up to respect the Christian virtues, or to think of marriage as a sacrament, may come upon disaster. But true love will deepen from chapter to chapter, with the continuous growth of each one of the potent and diverse elements which compose the total mystery, until at last, at the end of the story, we are presented with the spectacle of love complete and fulfilled, which is the nearest most of us can hope to come in this world to the Power which sustains the universe, and which deserves, but needless to say has not been accorded, a name of its own.

TO REMIND YOU –

(1) that the Quiet Room at our headquarters, 33 Portman Square, is open daily for the use of Members and Readers . . .

(2) that the Exhibition of Books written by Members is permanently established in the Hall at headquarters . . .

(3) that our fourth Annual Luncheon will be held on Saturday, 11th May. This is a notice for readers at a distance. Details later.

AUTUMN IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

RANDLE MANWARING

Swiftly the summer passes
  On swallow's wings,
Murmuring the mass migration
  Of living things.

Slowly the curtain closes
  On earth's festival,
Promising other roses
  While petals fall.

Soon, in the splendid evening,
  As the last hope dies,
A new, undreamed creation
  Through flames will rise.

INSUFFICIENCY

B. R. GIBBS

I did not ask for much and so was given
Only enough to build a little wall,
Then when the enemy came my poor defence
Against his armoury was but to fall

Face to the dust. Boldly you asked and received,
Building so high a wall that you could stand
Covered from head to foot and, mocking, stare
Down on the fear in my grass-scrabbling hand.

You offered me no shelter and no share
In your strong place. Nothing is left to me
But to forget I could have asked enough
To escape my own self-built insufficiency.

THE SECOND VISIT

MURIEL AGNES ARBER

Shall I keep places cloistered in my heart?
Streets that I dare not enter, houses, hills,
Where I was once so happy that I never
May risk the blurring of the memory?
Or, if I ventured now again to see them,
Would they bring back more achingly the loss?
Dare I return, or shall I keep them still
Locked in a secret chamber, warming me
With the remembrance of that white-hot time?
Or will the warmth of memory grow cold,
So that my precious store is ice, not fire?
Truth has revealed the inevitable Now,
Illusion gone, when rock-based life is free.
Why should I cherish memory of the sands?
The sun-warm sands that answered to my need,
Then shifted, drifting in the checkless tide
Of life that washes all the false away
And leaves the solid rock. On that sure base
I dare return to see what I believed
That I had lost. And all that loss was gain

In finding for myself the truth beneath
All transient rapture. I dare now return
To see the streets and houses, paths and hills
Where I was once so happy. I may feel
The sting of blowing sand from what remains,
But on the rock of full self-knowledge, free,
The cloisters of my heart may open wide,
The truth no longer hid in sanctuary.

THE FRITILLARIA

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW

Is it not strange how little things outlast
The later and the greater in the mind
And that the harsh years cannot make us blind
To sudden beauty seen in days long past?

For I remember once, when yet a boy,
Roaming the Oxford meadows, I beheld
A solitary fritillaria, single-belled,
With white and purple checked, a thing of joy.

It hung so gracefully, so delicately
Its lovely head that I could almost hear
Its musical response, faint, frail, yet clear,
When some soft summer wind went singing by.

And though long since it withered is and dead,
I never can forget it; it remains
A virgin symbol of fair innocence,
Fadeless, unfaded, in my heart and head.

For when I muse upon it, it brings back
The morning rapture and the high endeavour,
The visions splendid that are gone for ever,
The eager hopes that now, alas, I lack.

But still it fills my heart with peace and joy.
As when, a springtide freshness, on my sight,
I roamed the Oxford meadows, purple and white,
It sudden dawned when I was yet a boy.

Continued . . .

MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER

SIR FRANCIS MEYNELL

II

How, *how* did this frail woman manage so many lives? Whenever I try to find an answer, and dip into the family papers, I become not less but more perplexed. For consider: my parents had an unending struggle to make ends meet – they had built themselves a large house in London, a large family, a large circle of close friends, a larger 'salon'. To pay for it all, for us all, there was only a vast round of duties, journalistic duties, forever chasing each other through the weeks. My parents never gave up the habit of rigid personal economy which was then needed. My mother's account-books – yes, she always kept accounts – show her expenditure on lunches, never more than a shilling a day; on clothes, £8 this year, £11 that; with one extravagance, one only, at the end of her life, when money no longer bothered them: 'fur necklet £18, *to please Wilfrid*' reads her entry.

So with work. What George Meredith called her 'princely journalism' did not receive princely recompense! She earned little extras by contributing paragraphs for many years to the *Office Window* miscellany of the *Daily Chronicle* – at half-a-crown apiece! (My father was paid at double her rate.) And she never lost that habit of sending in her pars. . . .

Her 'princely journalism' took two forms. As children we were deeply aware of one of them. This was the editing, which my father and mother did together, of a weekly Catholic newspaper, *The Weekly Register*, for eighteen years. For twelve of the same years they invented, owned, edited, sub-edited, published, and mainly wrote a monthly literary magazine called *Merry England.*

Their library at 47 Palace Court was the scene, the almost desperate scene, of this editing. As a child I was allowed into that room on Thursdays, the press-day, only if I sat silent and out of mind under the long library table. I got to know my parents' helpers in emergency – and every Thursday was an emergency – not by their faces but by their feet. Coventry Patmore himself came to help to read proofs, and Francis Thompson and J. L. Garvin were set to writing 'fill-up' paragraphs or leading articles. To Patmore she had once written, of her translation of a Papal Allocution for the *Weekly Register*, that she had 'played no pranks with it'. Sometimes, she confessed, she made the Pope quote the English poets . . .

But there was a second side, an easier side, a more creative side to her journalism. When her child-bearing was over, she wrote essays for Henley, who edited the *Scots Observer*, and for Henry Newbolt and his *Monthly Review*, and J. L. Garvin in the *Outlook*. And week after week for six years she wrote an unsigned essay in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. This weekly article made a stir, a commotion, in the smaller and sensitive reading-world of the 'nineties; and the great writers of that day, pressing behind that anonymity, discovered her first as a name, then as an acquaintance, and, in the case of George Meredith, finally as his 'dearest friend', his 'dearest Portia', as he named her because of her power in arguing her case.

Indeed it was her writing that brought her not merely the rewards of creative work, but also nearly all the human relations which enriched her life. My father as a young man and a stranger, had read one of her sonnets, manoeuvred to be introduced to her, fell in love and married her. Coventry Patmore, who was next to my father the greatest emotion, and before him even the greatest intellectual admiration, of her life – he too came to her by way of her writing. So too did Francis Thompson. So too, by way of her essays, did Meredith.

There were, in fact, three great relevancies in my Mother's life, leaving no voids craving to be filled. Religion, literature, and family – she was lover of all these.

In her poetry, the things she had at heart provided, as the years went by, a hard content of thought. Imagination combines with feeling in this poem on the death of her friend the crossing-sweeper in Manchester Square:

> The paralytic man has dropped in death
> The crossing-sweeper's brush to which he clung,
> One-handed, twisted, dwarfed, scanted of breath,
> Although his hair was young.
>
> I saw this year the winter vines of France,
> Dwarfed, twisted goblins in the frosty drouth –
> Gnarled, crippled, blackened little stems askance
> On long hills to the South.
>
> Great green and golden hands of leaves ere long
> Shall proffer clusters in that vineyard wide.
> And O his might, his sweet, his wine, his song,
> His stature, since he died!

Her absorbing love of literature often made literature itself her theme in verse. 'My one, one masterpiece,' my Mother said to me of the next poem. She had been alive for the tercentenaries of Shakespeare's birth and his death – and she sees her longer life as enclosing his, from birth to the grave:

Longer than thine, than thine,
Is now my time of life; and thus thy years
Seem to be clasped and harboured within mine.
Oh, how ignoble this my clasp appears!

Thy unprophetic birth,
Thy darkling death; living I might have seen
That cradle, marked those labours, closed that earth.
O first, O last, O infinite between!

Now that my life has shared
Thy dedicated date, O mortal, twice,
To what all-vain embrace shall be compared
My lean enclosure of thy paradise . . .

Child, stripling, man – the sod.
Might I talk little language to thee, pore
On thy last silence? O thou city of God,
My waste lies after thee, and lies before.

A like idea possessed her when she was about to pass the age at which her father had died, in a poem addressed to her father. And because it was her theme, how could I escape an echo of her feeling when, quite lately, some very early poems of hers which had never been printed were discovered in a writing-book of hers made when she was seventeen years old? From my greater age I too saw, I newly met, my mother as a young girl in those long-hidden lines.

But what kind of woman was she? Not all goddess, not all saint, not the very Muse surely. But that is how most people saw her: that is how they wrote of her. Her appearance? She was not tall, but she looked it – was careful to look it. Her eyes are the same in all her pictures from the age of twenty-seven to seventy-five, large, dark, lovely, and fixed on a middle distance. Her voice was low, her laughter – a little conscious, like her use of her hands – was rare but high and gay. She was kind and attentive to everyone – studiously attentive even to her children as to strangers. A little vague she was about our names, or too preoccupied to take us very often beyond the general appellation, 'Child'; but with a maternal passion which I was, that I am, even to-day, hourly conscious of. When, from school, I asked her to sign her letters to me not only 'Mother', as she did, but also 'Alice Meynell' because I had so much pride in her name, she did this at once and never in twenty years thereafter failed of remembering this special attention. To her children as they became adolescent she was someone to be protected – from household duties, from finding her own 'bus routes, from undertaking works of mercy

beyond her strength; and to her husband, someone to be protected from her own rigid judgements and prejudices. I think now she was over-protected, even a little constrained with care. Our view of her – the family view – was that she was complete – completely just, holy, sure, happy. But does complete happiness reside in such a poem as this, in which she addressed the spirit of Sleep?

> Dear fool, be true to me!
> I know the poets speak thee fair, and I
> Hail thee uncivilly.
> O but I call with a more urgent cry!
>
> Come and release me; bring
> My irresponsible mind; come in thy hours;
> Draw from my soul the sting
> Of wit that trembles, consciousness that cowers.
>
> For if night comes without thee
> She is more cruel than day. But thou, fulfil
> Thy work, thy gifts about thee –
> Liberty, liberty, from this weight of will.

This is human and heroic as well. But I remember – remember now with regret that I didn't realize then, and so couldn't pander to them – her unheroic little vanities; her hiding of her age, her intense pleasure in praise – 'recognition' as it was then called, the only possession which she was willing to keep because she could not share this with the poor or the unhappy. I think of her serious dismay when the household arrangements for dinner guests went wrong and food, for example, was inadequate, as it so often was. Can you be the mother of eight children and work and work and work to house and feed and teach them and not be human? And human, how spiritually human, is this passage from a letter, written in her old age – but her mind was never old – to a nun who was her confidant:

> All my troubles are little, old, foolish, trivial as they always were – the troubles of my spiritual life, I mean. But as to sorrow, my failure of love to those that loved me can never be cancelled or undone. So I never fail in a provision of grief for any night of my life.

Thus she made fantastic atonement for neglect which was itself a liberal largesse; so Patmore, so Francis Thompson, so George Meredith, so her lovely and devoted American friend Agnes Tobin, received at length the concentration of her attention in long years of wakeful nights.

Much of Alice Meynell's poetry, and nearly all her best poetry, must be read and re-read by the eye, not merely listened to: but here is a poem which sings as well as tells. Take this key to it or you may

miss the compact meaning of the final line – which makes the contrast between the meaningless voice of the bird and the lovely things the human hearer ascribes to it. The title is 'A Thrush before Dawn'.

A voice peals in this end of night
  A phrase of notes resembling stars,
Single and spiritual notes of light,
  What call they at my window-bars?
    The South, the past, the day to be,
    An ancient infelicity.

Darkling, deliberate, what singe
  This wonderful one, alone, at peace?
What wilder things than song, what things
  Sweeter than youth, clearer than Greece,
    Dearer than Italy, untold
    Delight, and freshness centuries old?

And first first-loves, a multitude,
  The exaltation of their pain;
Ancestral childhood long renewed;
  And midnights of invisible rain;
    And gardens, gardens night and day,
    Gardens and childhood all the way.

What Middle Ages passionate,
  O passionless voice! What distant bells
Lodged in the hills, what palace state
  Illyrian. For it speaks, it tells,
    Without desire, without dismay
    Some morrow and some yesterday.

All-natural things! But more – Whence came
  This yet remoter mystery?
How do these starry notes proclaim
  A graver still divinity?
    This hope, this sanctity of fear?

    O innocent throat! O human ear!

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to any Member who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Two poems may be submitted for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

KALENDAR

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

Advent, quiet season of simplicity,
Echo of spring, when the robin's tranquil song
Falls like a leaf with the yellow leaf and the rains.
How easy it seems, as we stand facing the woodland's
Long paths of amethyst smoking with the warm mist,
To follow, to search. So easy, the leaf-quilted
Path, and the first frost trembling like a star,
Beckoning us onward, onward. Beyond the hill,
In the valley's fold glows the window of a stable.
Rest is there, firelight, the warmth of voices.
Look, through the doorway, a woman with a Child at her breast,
A lantern burning low, shadows that touch
Their cheeks like outstretched hands.

'O that we were there,
In Bethlehem.' The sigh dies down,
Mild as a lamb's cry, and each one sees
The stable beckon like a candle in the darkness,
And the Three held and shrouded in the tent of our love
As if between hands linked in a spire of prayer.
The shepherds kneel, there, in that actual time,
Aware of the straw pricking their bent knees, smelling
The milky scent of hay, hearing the raw
Thread of a child's cry ragged as a rook cawing.
Did they feel the wonder of it tingle at their scalps, and shuffle
Half ill-at-ease, those countrymen, those yokels
With the world's eyes, and all the future pressing
Upon them, staring beyond them as they laid down
Their crooks, their lamb, their heart?

'O that we were there' – And yet we rise
From our knees and move in reverence and humility
Up to the altar, as the shepherds moved up the field path.
And the Cross still burns, a star beyond our dazzled
Eyes, and there, awaiting us, He lies
Dandled in a hand, cradled in a house of bread,
In Bethlehem. God, stooping to what He made,
Beyond all we can give, or offer, or lay
Before Him, for He makes that final act
Of love and humility, is Himself broken
And lies naked in our hand. In Bethlehem,
To which we come again, and then again
As the joyful shepherds, as the bright cohorts of angels,

To lay what little we have, our crooks, the burden
We bear; our lamb, the love we cosset and dandle;
And last, and hardest to give, our stubborn hearts –

Rising from our knees we see, scarring the hillside
A shadow falling, dark claw, crooked spoor of destiny.
How can the soft light from a trembling candle
Throw this harsh imprint of a Cross before us?
And yet this points our way, up the lean hillside.
Bare stone, grey ash, the naked rock and clinker.
On through February's twilight and the whip of March
At our backs, white wind, and brittle windflower, bruised
By the storm, the anemone, dark as blood, to stain
The way, and the rod of palm, slender as a sceptre
Yet whittled to a whip, a thong cutting the air.
Until, beyond, and spilt like sunlight, the primrose
And the quartz-white narcissus, rose of Easter
On its jade stem bursts through the dark ground.
Christ is risen! Over the crooked scar
The healing grasses creep, and songs of birds
And the singing heart are clear as dew in the sunlight.

O Lord, if it could be
That we, like Peter, through the cottage wall
Could hear You moving, a sandal rasp on rush,
The soft brush of a garment, and the footfall
Stealing out into the morning's hush,
And then the eternal holy mystery
Of God with God in prayer made one again.
There could be no more pain,
And the bright earth would shine, star without sin or stain.

But years and days
Divide us. We cannot hear Your mortal voice,
Nor feel Your hand, still warm with flesh, on ours.
And yet, O heart. O sinful heart, rejoice,
More blessed he who has not seen, yet shares
This love, and joins in worship and in praise.
For still in the quiet room God moves, the ear
Of faith is sharp to hear,
Rising to link with His the burning flame of prayer.

For there is a way, remember, a meeting place,
For God, stooping to man. This cannot crumble
As houses made with hands; a room in the mind,
Whose lattice lets the moon's cold flood pour in
With light and expectation. No one is here,
The silence trembles. And then, creaking on the stair

Steps slowly ascending, voices, low and warm,
Of men speaking with their friends of trivial things,
Unaware of the future bright with wonder, shining
Ahead like a dawn of dew-white grass and stillness.
Like us, too busy to sense the miracle
Of a step, a breath, a heart beat, tusselling
Under God's steady, loving, pitying gaze,
Like ants that seethe in the still calm of sunlight.

A room, and twelve who come. They look and see
Bare walls, a table, bread to break, and wine.
No more than a meal they have shared, will share again.
Unaware of the years ahead, the tingling future
Pricked with eyes, tense with thoughts that turn
Back to this moment when He arose and took
The Cup. And yet, to those who leaned and watched Him
This was no different. Only the future marked it
As changed, only, looking back, they saw it
As the white moment, as the pinnacle.
Men in the shallow warmth of valleys, turn
In awe to the hills they crossed with downcast eyes.

'O that we were there – '. Like loving hands
Brush and pen and thought have touched this hour.
Ears have yearned to hear the glow of that Voice
A thousand years away; time's steady silence
Lying over it. Yet as we kneel in worship
Each one of us is there, in the Upper Room
Washed clean by light, bare and worn as ash.
Each one of us hears that Voice, clearer than mortal
Sound trembling through the fragile channels of the ear,
And each alone there does not kneel alone,
But in his separate cell of prayer and praise
Is joined to his neighbour, kneeling apart and silent.
As the clear cells of flesh, the singing units,
Bright atoms of being cling in love and honour
To make a man, so cling these two or three
Here gathered in God's name, and rise, not men
Walking in the cold loneliness of self,
But as a Body, incorruptible,
Bright miracle that spans a thousand years,
Bridge and white rainbow spun from light, and hung
Defying the storm, God's hand outstretched to man,
Lifting him from the dust to the high stars,
A covenant that in a moonlit room
And in a human voice, God made with us.

Look upward, towards the sapphire crown of heaven
As those from whom He moved, and then return
Rejoicing, for He is with us still. He reigns,
And yet is held in the little nut of bread,
Smallest of things, seed of eternity.
And in the fallible heart of sinful man.
It is noonday of Ascension tide, the triumph
Of summer, burning with gorse, when the last white surf
Of the hawthorn ebbs, and the tide of spring has dried.
O swallow, O blue forked flame of Pentecost,
Trembling like a sapphire tongue of fire.
O white star of the May, O secret rose
Opening in the sudden hush of knowledge,
How can we bear you, unprepared, unwilling?
Easter was fresh as children's joy, a birthday
Of spring and crocus, but this, the visitation
Of the dry, scorching wind to sear and tear us!
Yet, as blue fire tempers the blade and whets it,
We shall rise burnished, white as the honed steel.

Not as a dove, but as a hawk descending
Return, O Holy Spirit, to those awaiting
Truth like a talon that grips the unguarded wrist.
Like the grey heron drowsing upon the water,
Brooding on her own reflected image,
Forgetting her powerful wings, the air uplifting

With blue, cold freedom and solitude of light,
In mud, mud, and a shallow, stagnant inlet.
We, too, have forgotten the austere, difficult way,

Evaded the promise, thrown the burden down.
O spirit, the blow, the onslaught we desire,
Cruel and longed-for pain of talons gripping

To lift us from this solitude of self,
Desired and desiring. Alone in the core of storm
Blue vortex of torment passed, our true peace lies.

Crimson as a rose, crowned with a diadem
Of gold, Whitsuntide burns, its sign the iris,
Dark flower over whose velvet falls a secret
Vein of gold, fierce flame of Pentecost,
Licks like a tongue of fire, a fountain of stillness.
And then the threefold print of Trinity,
Keymark, the trefoil leaf of Eternity
Will lift up, sign of wholeness and completion.
Beyond, the long, green pastures stretch ahead,
Where, like daisies, or their stellar doubles

Shine the saints' days, as a meadow's emerald
Is sewn with flowers whiter than seed pearls.
God's geniuses, the strenuous ones, who now
Sing round His burning throne.
Alban, the soldier, walking to death as if
He led his legions; John, whose flame follows him
From midsummer in small gold flowers and signal fires
And in a thousand hearts; Peter, the fisherman,
Who is our failure, and is our firm rock also;
Swithun, whose name whispers like a light rain
Swishing on the apples, drenching summer's leaves.
Margaret, the virgin shepherdess, and Mary
Whose love lay like a bruise across her heart
Broken in penitence, cloaked in her own bright hair.
Lawrence and Bernard, Richard, walking in gentleness
Over the downs where the sheep forgotten graze
And look up at him with startled yellow eyes.
Till Michael stands shining in the midst of angels,
And at his feet, rose-quartz and amethyst
His blossoms, michaelmas daisies drenched with rain,
Sharp, crystalline flowers, whose facets of purple and blue
Burn over the yellow of the year's fallen leaves –
Then Francis, the gentle, brown and slight as a wren.
Wilfrid, wearing his bishopric like a cope
Proud white and gold. Hilda, the queenly abbess,
And Audrey, the abbess queen. Closer than daisies
Which print out spring on our lawns, a nebula
Of saints who are a chant, a song of praise
Blending to our own festival, the quiet
Of All Hallows, when mist has quenched the salt of stars,
And All Saints dawns with November's frosty cold.
Blue as a cloud, dark mystery, place of returning,
It lies ahead, the quiet woods and the silences
From which we came, known, and yet still unknown.
Over the rotting leaf and the thorn of the brambles,
The fallen bloom of spring, the fruits' frost-shrunken
Purple, and the dissolution of the year,
A star burns frostily. Look, for there beyond us
Beckons the mortal echo of that white splendour-
Muted radiance, the trembling flame of a candle,
Human, fragile, through the narrow window beckoning
On down the dark path, on through the tracks frost-whitened,
Bone-bare and aching with cold. Yet this same roadway
We tread was beaten down for us by God.
Follow Him then, and kneel as did those shepherds
Who saw the star, in heaven and in the stable,
Follow, and kneel, and praise.

O fortunate shepherds who over the rim of the manger
Saw your God face to face! The blunt, dark eyes
Of childhood, blue as a gentian dimmed with dew
Stared up. Did you see beyond their opaque mildness
The vast night's sapphire shaft of infinite space
He made? Or were you ill-at-ease, half-frightened?
Aware only of the sharp prick of straw,
Of your calloused hands, the daub of tar on your knuckles?
Awed at birth, at the presence of the Mother
Whose eyes were dark with love and adoration?
O fortunate shepherds! And yet we, too, kneel down
Face to face with our God, and sense that same
Infinite pity, not in those human limits
Of rounded cheek and brow fronded with curls,
But fiercer, brighter, holier and nearer,
Burning within us. How can a star break,
The heaven's fixed radiance fall? And yet, at Christmas,
God Himself was quenched, hidden in the weakest
Thing He made, a child. And still in us
Most fallible, most broken, He abides.
We kneel, and yet, the true humility
Is His, and His the love we grudge and squander.
Then, with the bright quires like the legioned stars,
And with the shepherds, O fortunate, O happy,
Let us sing again, 'Glory to God in the highest.'
Praise, praise forever, burning like those legioned stars –

We, whose lives are held in His, the Kalendar
Enclosing us, the wing whose silver feathers
Shadow us now, and always, have come full circle,
And rest, with His love around us like a hand.

WALTER DE LA MARE
SOME READERS' TRIBUTES

A VISION

Sir, – I enclose a copy of a letter I received in May of this year from the late Walter de la Mare (probably one of the last he signed), in reply to one I wrote him just after the broadcast 'Tribute' to him on his eighty-third birthday. In this letter I asked him if he could recall dining with a small medico-literary club of which I was a member, and giving us a talk on Poetry. I also dared, as a gesture of tribute, to enclose a copy of the 'Guy's Hospital Gazette' containing my verses, 'The Astronomer After Death'. These verses you will see he turned in a characteristically eerie way to allude to his approaching death. He 'came to the place my astronomer speaks from' only a few weeks afterwards!

W. GRANT OLIVER

THE ASTRONOMER AFTER DEATH

Since Time and Space are interchangeable,
(The wise Astronomers say);
Can souls and bodies find it manageable
To be in different places
At the same hour of day?

Ah! No Astronomer is wise enough
To tell us this;
But living souls at last their bodies slough
In never-differing Moments,
And constant Space of bliss.

So, when the busy beat of Time doth cease,
And the Astronomer's tube
Hath fallen from his nerveless hand, he sees
Nor time, nor any Space;
Only th' Eternal Face.

W.G.O.

4 South End House, Montpelier Row, Twickenham. 1st May, 1956.

Dear Mr. Oliver, (Twenty-five years ago!) It seems absolutely impossible – I can recall even the light of the candles, but not any of the 'talk'. That is still possibly in typescript somewhere here, but I am coming to where your astronomer speaks from, and I should very much like to read what he writes to you when he writes again.

I hope the 'Gazette' realizes its luck in having so closely charged a poem in its pages and what a joy it is – so oddly rare – to read something flawlessly written and of which every word has a perfect right to (as well as happiness in) its place.

With all good wishes, yours sincerely,

WALTER DE LA MARE

FOR WALTER DE LA MARE

(22nd June, 1956)

Through the wicket that swings out on to the dark,
You have gone, with your dressing gown round your shoulders,
Gone, with a question yet on your lips.
'I meant to ask you – do you suppose that – '
The gruff, smooth voice, and the closing door.
A clock ticks on. The room grows colder.
Teatime – and still no candles lit.

PAMELA CLEAVER

OF WALTER DE LA MARE AND SOME MUTUAL FRIENDS

I might have guessed he knew them
When he wrote –
'*From those strange windows*
Called the eyes, there looks
A heart athirst
For heaven's waterbrooks . . .'

E. POWELL

MY BODY DIED, NOT I

MARIE TELLO PHILLIPS

I was aware,
  my outer sheath
  was leaving me to die.
I was lighter than the air,
  Yet I was there beneath.
I had thought to go,
  but my body died, not I,
  and thus I found it so.
Just as the bud remained
  when the leaf was spent,
All I ever gained
  before my body went,
I had but to fulfil –
  as bud will leaf again –
For I was living still:
  and though not one with men,
I, too, can spread my wings
And find what new life brings.

BALLOONS

JOHN R. BIGGS

Two toy balloons in the black boughs entangled,
Bright beacons in the January mist
That pierce the drab routine
Of daily life with thoughts of carnival,
Of dancers, music, Columbine.

These coloured spheres
Delayed in their ascent to join the stars,
A child's lost toy that rent a tiny heart
As flame-red skins of air rose out of reach
And lodged like lanterns in the tree.

So dreams float up, bright orbs of hope,
Bubbles of wish-fulfilment, gay with
Rainbow radiance, here and now,
Soon, too soon, entangled underneath the sky
Like toy balloons on a blackened bough.

WINTER PRAYER

SHEILA BLANCHARD

Pray now, for those upon whose hearts
Winter lies deeper than this snow,
Where pity, like bird-print, alights ephemeral.

Their grave shall be drilled
Deep in the sightless stone, and frost shall lie
Death-long upon their faces
Whose memory no children cherish.

Pray that some sun shall burn
Bone into love, crack the heart's kernel,
And liberate the ember under the snow.

A GIFT

M. E. MILLEN

Saying 'I give you love to-day'
he laid within my hands a flower.
No coffered wealth have I to hold,
but here was dower,
unmatched, unminted, manifold.
I rose, and I had power.

C. M.

MARTHA BACON

Love that shall come, Franciscan, to your door,
Is a great king. His ermine cast aside,
His sandal fouled with earth and all his store
Of wealth gone out to avarice, the wide
World his council and the towering air
His bright pavilion. And every flower set
In heraldry upon his shield shall swear
That he stands forth, superb Plantagenet.
For all forlornly as to Walsinghame
He walks and takes the anger of the wind
Upon his person, and the unkindly sea
Rises against him knowing not his name
Nor that true lover whom he thought to find
Where the gold broom blossoms so fragrantly.

WAKING IN DARK

ISOBEL CUMMING

On waking from a dream
Cold anxiety
Takes us by the throat.
We fly in frightened thought
To those we love, or God.
But frail their midnight power,
Their thin imagined words,
As Shelley's paper boat.

In brittle sunlit day
Warm child-confidence
Tugs us by the hand.
For prayer we have no need.
The world is water-smooth,
Death Atlantis-far.
Our power is strong as summer,
As rowing-boat of steel,
Or towers on the sand.

RABBIT-WAYS

TERENCE HEYWOOD

Now as the bluebells open
  and grass grows thick and fast,
the ways that last week wandered
through woodland, down and meadow –
  the ways are nearly lost.

There is no scut or scurry
  on once the favourite knoll:
first butterflies zigzagging,
occasionally swallows
  dipping; while slowworms curl

beside and may take over
  the warren for their young.
(And yet we modern humans,
lighting on Hittite cities,
  can't fit there, being too long).

THESE GREAT PEACEFUL LINES . . .

From the French of Francis Jammes

MARJORIE BALDWIN

These great peaceful lines which are confounded
Now with the sky, now with the earth,
They will no longer bring to my solitary heart
That peace of other times which I thought was so deep.

Thus the charm of valleys will pass away.
Thus will pass away the charm of my heart.
What shall I have regretted? Pain perhaps;
Perhaps pain, which already has passed.

The blows of the woodman are heavy in the little hill.
The willow is flowering. Spring is coming.
But this time, O God, neither dream nor sigh
Is borne in the wind upon this forest pool.

LOST MAJESTY – DONEGAL

CLARE CAMERON

Suddenly, a bright curtain was suspended in the air,
Shimmering with meadows, farms and streams,
As it may be in heaven. Scarcely in my dreams
Or vision have I seen a sight more fair.

Silver and gold it was, of texture rich and fine,
And a myriad colours, yet not the hues we know,
As if the earth transparently did show
The radiance of another world, divine,

And then was gone. There was only the cloud
Over the mountain slopes. O heavy day
Upon that revelation pure and gay
Which wrapped the glimpse of heaven in her shroud.

*

MODESTLY QUOTED

Turning over the first page of *The Poetry Review* has seemed like opening the door of a new world. D. TUFFIN.

Enclosed is a draft on New York to pay for the renewal of my membership of The Poetry Society for the year 1956-57. It is publishing the best poetry magazine in the world. Long may *The Poetry Review* thrive and prosper. Its influence for good in strengthening one of the finest of all the fine arts is appreciated by many who think that Poetry can be clear, and still be fine art. LENA MEARLE SHULL.

'DEAR EDITORS–'

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*.)

THE ALICE MEYNELL TRIBUTE

May I express the hope that Sir Francis Meynell's tribute to his Mother will lead to a re-discovery of Alice Meynell, whose calm, poise, discipline and confidence are so needed in our atomic age?

Meanwhile here is a fragment of history to serve a future biographer. Mrs. Meynell had come to Downside School to see her son, Francis. Discussing his progress, the headmaster said to her: 'There is really no problem. It is only a matter of being simple.'

'But, oh Father Ramsay,' she exclaimed, 'how difficult it is to be simple!'

AMBROSE AGIUS

ASSONANCE AND HALF-RHYMES

I wish people who want to contradict would read articles and letters more carefully. Mr. Terence Heywood, regarding my letter on assonance half-rhyme in your issue for October-December 1955, writes: 'Herbert Palmer thinks of (internal) assonance particularly as a device of the Victorians and Edwardians. It has always, surely, been an ingredient of much of our best vowel music' and then proceeds to quote a little-known line of Edmund Spenser: 'My love is like the ice, and I to fire.'

What I actually wrote was: 'Assonance has always been a conscious or unconscious device in the *internal structure* of English Poetry, particularly obvious as the years advanced; it was much employed by Tennyson and the poets who directly came after his period – Wilde, Dowson, Lionel Johnson, and others.' I suppose I ought to have underlined the word *always*.

It is odd that Mr. Heywood should quote a line from a sonnet by Spenser which I have imagined to be my special discovery. In a broadcast of a few years ago on the history and development of the English Sonnet I made special use of the Sonnet by Spenser which commenced with that line. It is, I think, the most melodious of all Spenser's Sonnets, though the assonantal effects are not particularly prominent and the ninth line is very defective, due either to a misprint or because Spenser was bound too much to a syllabic diction, not noticing that only four of the syllables are strongly stressed (though differences of Elizabethan pronunciation may account for it): 'What more miraculous thing may be told.'

As regards half-rhymes in general, assonantal, consonantal, and neither quite one nor the other, I think the poem containing the most numerous examples is not recent but Victorian. I refer to Mrs. Browning's long narrative poem, 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship' – as melodious and original in technique as it is arresting as a love story.

HERBERT PALMER

*

Book Reviews. – Will readers please note that although books are reviewed in these pages they are not sold by us? Order from bookshops direct.

SUNDAY PILGRIMAGE

PAUL SELVER

Near dingy Walham Green, in a back-street, rank
With tenements, the school looms up, as of old
In the blurred years, when V.R. was enscrolled
On pillar-boxes. There it was I drank

First from the fount of learning. There I progressed
From shrill slate-pencil to ink and copy-book;
From Mary's Little Lamb to Tennyson's Brook;
From abacus to fractions. And all with zest.

In an eerie hush (the school will, at this time
To-morrow, mightily seethe) I linger and brood
Upon the stages of my lengthy climb
From Infants up to Standard Seven. My mood
Is mournful. But I rejoice at least that then
I.Q. and such-like fads were beyond our ken.

IT ISN'T DONE

A. L. G. CHALLIS

Strange fact, but indisputable, that laws we thought immutable,
Are blown to bits by scientists, astronomers and others.
They used to say the earth was flat, but someone soon disposed of that,
And a round world was recognized.
By land and sea and air we go, there is no end to what we know,
Our knowledge is immense.
Into the earth we dig and delve, and stop for lunch at half-past twelve,
Which after all is common-sense.
Now up into blue space we peer, and wonder what is happening there,
The moon becomes a target
For weird space ships and rockets swift, as to its light our eyes we lift;
And for our goal we mark it.

And now it seems that other worlds may even be exploring us,
With interest and rapidity,
But closed-up minds reject the thought and question its validity.
And, after all, it's fair enough and not beyond conception,
That flying-saucer crews may doubt the warmth of their reception,

For minds in mental blindness born reject the mere idea with scorn,
And say with indignation,
'That though earth-men may soar in space, it certainly is not the place
Of denizens from other worlds to come and visit us.
Such liberties we can't permit,' and on our dignity we sit,
And murmur very peevishly, 'It simply isn't done!'

CONTEMPORARY POSY

KATHLEEN V. RICHARDSON

There is no other name:
Our triumph – each bud's formed and furled the same,
From left to right
As neat as an umbrella, and as tight;
And choicely sprayed
To any modern shade
Is a rose is a rose is a rose.

And as for those
Absurdly flushed, full-blown and lachrymose
Edwardian blooms
That linger in pale donnish drawing-rooms
Of Petty Cury
Glad to be pot-pourri,
Cabbage is cabbage is cabbage.

Hand me the chlorophyll
That goes to keep the rose authentic still –
Though I suppose
The streamline of advancing science shows
True franchisement
From all this foolish scent
Is no nose is no nose is no nose.

PLAIN ENGLISH

EVELYN ROCHE

Who was it first affixed that tag, and did he quite forget
The many gradients between remorse and just regret?
And were there never moments, when, with all his letters sealed
He wondered what, in fact, he'd said and what plain words concealed?
And did he never, with a qualm, reflect that what is read
Between the lines depends on what is in the reader's head?

WHITHER POETRY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Chatto Book of Modern Poetry, edited by C. Day Lewis and John Lehmann (Chatto & Windus, 15s.).

New Poems – 1956, edited by Stephen Spender, Elizabeth Jennings, and Dannie Abse. (Michael Joseph, 12s. 6d.).

Time was when poetry was sheer improvisation. One cannot imagine the Psalms being studied in advance or revised by King David. No doubt the poetry of the Iliad was also spontaneous. To-day what is accepted as the best verse comes from the poet's workshop where it has been 'hammered into shape'. Poetry which was singing has become composition, the building up from a telling sentence as in an essay, the fitting of colourful phrases into a verbal mosaic, the imparting of rhythm to humdrum prose, and then spacing out the enlivened sentences to run adown the page in lines of unequal length. But that does not represent a tithe of the hard work put in by the modern poet. He has the exacting task of revision and the deletion of common words which have lost their meaning and the substitution of words fresher, more arresting or euphonious. He may have to rack his brain for the right word or have to wait days till it comes to him. But the product of the poet's labours, the finished article, may turn out to be pleasing and in some rare cases may seem to be a work of genius.

New Poems– 1956 is worth possessing for the 'Elegy' by Dylan Thomas, unfinished and probably his last work. A footnote informs the reader that it was found together with sixty pages of jottings and trial lines. By that we may appreciate that even though the poet may have been socially undisciplined he remained highly disciplined as a craftsman. This posthumously published poem is very good, as one may judge by the first two verses here quoted:

> Too proud to die, broken and blind he died
> The darkest way, and did not turn away,
> A cold kind man brave in his narrow pride
>
> On that darkest day. Oh, forever may
> He lie lightly, at last, on the last, crossed
> Hill, under the grass, in love, and there grow

According to one writer who knew Thomas well it was his custom to build up a whole poem from a single phrase which pleased him, to grow the poem from the seed.

That is at least a clue as to how some modern poetry is written. But not all. There are many poets who let fly without premeditation. *The Chatto Book of Modern Poetry* begins with Hardy and ends with Helen Spalding dreaming that someone has cut her throat. Thomas Hardy may be the first of the moderns and his lovely poem 'Afterwards' is more a composition than an inspiration, built up on the haunting line 'He was a man who used to notice such things'. Also early in this anthology we find Rudyard Kipling, but surely he is only a modern poet by virtue of date of death. He sang or ranted his poems into shape or got carried on by gusts of poetic impulse. He put forth his right hand

and the Lord did wonderful things, and for that reason he seems to belong to the Victorians. Not in the pride of place, but there all right if a little to the side.

It is a long way from Kipling to D. H. Lawrence, Auden and T. S. Eliot: they are in different worlds, though it may be that Eliot strides between two worlds and has a foot in each. In his serious poems he has preserved the continuity of English verse and there would be nothing remiss in finding him between Browning and Tennyson on the bookshelf. He has the 'poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' and also the 'thoughts which break through language and escape'. Because he is steeped in the classics Eliot is no sure guide when trying to answer the question, *Whither Poetry?* Except in humorous and satirical verse he shows no direction.

English people used to think, speak, and quote poetry much more than they do to-day. Poets had a national background of poetic feeling. Now public speech is as devoid of rhythm and harmony as a railway station-megaphone. There is a frightful gap, and the new poets have a try to cover it. So we have radio-scripts (which would not be allowed) in verse; street-corner speeches with rhythm if not with reason; letters to the editor in rhyme, sometimes too dirty for a respectable Press. 'I met Poetry, an old prostitute walking along Piccadilly,' says David Wright in the Chatto anthology. Rather terrible, but he felt the need to desecrate silence with a verse. He meant that Poetry is now soliciting in the street and has little custom. Roy Fuller writes in *New Poems*:

> Yes, I have caught the times like a disease
> Whose remedy is still experimental;
> And felt the times as some enormous gaffe
> I cannot forget,

The two anthologies taken together are well worth conning and musing over. There will be some pleasure, some discovery, and a questioning may remain – to what is this modern poetry leading? It is difficult to come to a conclusion and make a prediction, but a question stated without an answer is sometimes worth while.

ABOUT CHRISTINA

EVELYN D. BANGAY

Christina Rossetti, by Margaret Sawtell (Mowbray 10s. 6d.).
Poems of Christina Rossetti, selected by Kathleen Jarvis (Mowbray 6s.).

The publishers have been wise to issue these two books at the same time, for the biography, although well illustrated by poems and quotations, makes many references to other poems, and most of these are among those selected and arranged by Kathleen Jarvis, so that one book is complementary to the other.

Christina Rossetti's life was very much bound up with her religion, and both are revealed in her poetry. To her religion she owed her experiences of ecstacy but also the frustrations of her worldly happiness. Her life, in more ways than one a sad one, and her background – of a distinguished family – are explored with care and insight by Margaret Sawtell, while the poems selected by Mrs. Jarvis are chosen to show all sides of Christina's character, both gay and grave. The few pages of nursery songs are particularly enjoyable, and it is interesting to note how she experimented with metrical patterns at times while working for the most part in very simple traditional designs.

TRADITION AND DECADENCE

HERBERT PALMER

The Penguin Book of English Verse. Introduced and edited by John Hayward (Penguin Books, 4s. 6d.).

This is a very erratic and disproportionate anthology and no complete guide to English Poetry 1500–1955, as it purports to be. Its best parts often seem over-conscious of *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, but it starts from a later date, and whereas Quiller-Couch's book stops at the Armistice year, John Hayward's goes close into the present. Up to 1918 Mr. Hayward never completely outrages the sensibilities, though why he has entirely omitted Ancient Border Ballads, Robert Burns and Walter Scott, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Mary Coleridge, and certain others of their sex, passes comprehension, unless it is that Mr. Hayward is prejudiced against women and the Scottish, for both are very inadequately represented, even down to the present time.

All the same, up to Wilfred Owen there is nothing to complain about very grievously as regards the actual *contents*, but after that point, from Wallace Stevens onwards, the debacle is really frightful. The English poetry of the last thirty-seven years is exclusively represented by the following (many of them American): Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, Robinson Jeffers, John Crowe Ransom, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Hart Crane, Edward E. Cummings, W. H. Auden, Edwin Muir, Edith Sitwell, Robert Graves, Edmund Blunden, Cecil Day Lewis, William Empson, Louis MacNeice, Stephen Spender and Dylan Thomas. Out of more than thirty poems by these, scarcely half a dozen can truthfully be labelled 'good.'

It will be noticed that all the Georgians of that period, except Blunden, are omitted, and so are outstanding outsiders who made their reputations between 1918 and 1930 – such as Roy Campbell, Redwood-Anderson, Humbert Wolfe, Richard Church, Dorothy Wellesley. Nearly all the earlier Georgians, even W. H. Davies, are also omitted. So are Sassoon and Elroy Flecker, if you can call them Georgians. As regards the poets who became prominent in the earlier years of this century, there is no selection from Chesterton, Belloc, Binyon, Watson, Newbolt, Noyes, or John Davidson. All the poets of the Irish Literary Renaissance (late as well as early), with the exception of Yeats, are also conspicuous by their absence.

And consider the disproportions of quantity and space. Bridges, Masefield and A. E. Housman get one short poem apiece (covering two pages in all), against the six poems and seven pages of 'The Three Blind Mice.' Almost as bad, Yeats gets only seven pages against Eliot's ten and a third pages. Nobody has ever disputed Yeats's right to first place among the poets of the last sixty years, but Eliot's major importance has been often queried, even by his friends.

As to the poetry of the last thirty-seven years, why did Mr. Hayward select as he has done? What is the answer to the riddle? Is the fiasco due to ignorance or insensitivity or opportunism? Or is he one of those who think that the uglier the age the uglier must be its verse if it is to record the

age artistically? Or is he making a gesture of derision, indulging in a kind of practical satire? Is Mr. Hayward doing what many of the Irish have credited to Yeats in the last pages of his *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, trying to show how shapeless and how bad are his latest moderns against the poets who preceded them? Not at all an improbably Irish gesture, because did not Yeats write in his last published poem, *Under Ben Bulben*, just before he died? –

> Irish poets, learn your trade,
> Sing whatever is well made,
> Scorn the sort now growing up
> All out of shape from toe to top,
> Their unremembering hearts and heads
> Base-born products of base beds.

Does Mr. Hayward really mean something like that? It almost looks like it.

'THE STAGE NEEDED SWEEPING'

F. PRATT GREEN

New Lines, edited by Robert Conquest (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.).
Borestone Mountain Poetry Awards, 1955 (Stanford Univ. Press: Cumberlege, 24s.).
Poems Old and New, by John Hall Wheelock (Scribner, 21s.).
The River Steamer, by E. J. Scovell (Cresset Press, 9s. 6d.).
Tally 300, by J. P. Fletcher (Hand and Flower Press, 10s. 6d.).

The stage needed sweeping, according to Robert Conquest, of influences which corrupted poetry in the 1940's (the dominating poet of this period, Dylan Thomas, is discreetly not named), and 'residual nuisances like the Social-realists, the Lallans-mongers, the church-furnishers, and the neo-Georgians.' He claims that the neo-Empsonians, to use the accepted but dubious label, have returned to 'the principle that poetry is written by and for the whole man, intellect, emotions, senses and all.' The poetry of the 1950's refuses 'to abandon a rational structure and comprehensible language.'

After this brandishing of brooms, one turns expectantly to the nine poets represented in *New Lines*: Elizabeth Jennings, John Holloway, Philip Larkin, Thom Gunn, Kingsley Amis, D. J. Enright, Donald Davie, Robert Conquest himself, and John Wain. What impression do they make? They have certainly opened windows and let in some much-needed fresh air. The characteristic poets of the 1950's, as the editor candidly admits, have their faults, and one senses here and there in this admirable collection a flatness which time will probably make flatter and a cleverness which will probably seem less clever. But *New Lines* should be read by all, without prejudice, and its virtues appreciated – before the dust settles again and the stage is swept clean of the neo-Empsonians in their turn.

It is to be hoped that the American editors of the *Borestone Mountain Poetry Awards 1956* have been introduced to at least some of our younger poets. Into the 1955 volume, packed with felicitous American verse which lacks bite, only Dannie Abse, Jon Silkin, and one or two other British poets have

insinuated themselves. What a joy it would be to stumble upon something astringent by Larkin, Amis, or Wain!

John Hall Wheelock, a typical Borestone Mountain poet, is essentially lyrical, rarely subtle, generally buoyant and optimistic, and always easy on the ear. *Poems Old and New* is likely to be widely read and quickly forgotten.

Miss E. J. Scovell's subjects, also accessible to the ordinary reader, are explored with sensitivity, her rhythms are natural, and her choice of words is immaculate:

> Drifted with leaves to the dense, sheltering quarter,
> The endmost harbour of the lake,
> The swans in grey and chestnut-headed drake
> Carve their paths on the tessellated water.

The River Steamer has given me, and should give many others, deep pleasure.

Why is it so few poets in these days write long poems on ambitious themes? Is it due to lack of vitality in the poets, courage in the publishers, or interest in the public? Here, at last, is such a poem. *Tally 300* is a powerful, compassionate evocation, from personal experience, of a life lived in a mining community, a life of psychological tensions and physical dangers. Although presented to us, and wisely so, as a sequence of poems of varying forms and moods, it has a real, not an imposed, unity. It achieves the further distinction of being a religious poem unspoilt by religiosity. If *Tally 300* does not become genuinely popular, as it deserves, we shall be compelled to admit that poetry exists now only for the select few and small coteries.

An ugly thought, however, raises its head. Does J. P. Fletcher, who has obvious affinities with Masefield, belong to one of those residual-nuisance groups which must be swept from the stage? Heaven forbid!

SHIFTLESS SAMUEL

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Vols. I and II, edited by Earle Leslie Griggs. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, London: Cumberlege £5 5s. the set – in U.K. only.)

For the first time all the known eighteen hundred letters by Coleridge have been brought together. A third of them have not been previously published, and numerous passages omitted by earlier editors have been textually restored from holographs. These first two volumes of 641 letters cover 1785–1800 and 1801–1806; the highlights of course are the poet's magically creative years, 1797 and 1798. Every effort has been made to reproduce the letters exactly as written, and so to give the full period flavour. Even Coleridge's German habit of distinguishing nouns by initial capitals and his shuffling inconsistency with his own rules are faithfully followed.

It cannot be said that as a letter-writer he is among the great and select band which includes Lamb and Horace Walpole. Like his contemporary De Quincey, whose personal spinelessness also was somewhat similar, he is far too bookish in prose, too self-conscious, too voluminous, and far too addicted to the sprawl of the parenthesis for that. Indeed, he somewhere defends his indeterminateness of prose-structure, his habit of thinking and

feeling at various levels simultaneously, as giving to the listener a more living illusion of real life. Seminal even in this, as in his much greater but similarly inconclusive activities, he may be said to anticipate the stream-of-consciousness method practised by Virginia Woolf, his whole-hearted admirer.

What almost seems another, but less laudable, modern characteristic is his pathological concern about himself and his own body, his unceasing self-experimentation with dope of all kinds, opium being only one. Hardly a letter of his maturity is without some sickening and detailed analysis of his mental and physical inside. To the life-long lover of his poems, his egotism in quoting his own verse, and his insincerity in fobbing off a bosom friend with verbatin repetitions of striking phrases he has already addressed to another, come certainly as shocks. A shock, too, is his hypocrisy, during the estrangement from his wife, in writing affectionate appeals to her and pulling her character to tatters in letters to others by virtually the same post. Isn't it high time that we who are so obsessed with his poetic genius should put in a word for that quite ordinary but truly good and patient woman, Mrs. Coleridge, who had so long to endure it? Even the grossly maltreated Wordsworths had much less to bear from him.

Our picture, and Lamb's, of this intermittently great poet as an archangel – slightly damaged – is not substantially altered by these two volumes, though the many sidelights provided, especially on his relationships with Dorothy Wordsworth and Sara Hutchinson, are both valuable and fascinating. The books are meticulously produced, not only in the text and the printing of it, but in the facsimiles of letters, and in the Shuter, the Northcote, and the German pastel-portrait.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE SLOVENLY

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Right Word, Wrong Word, by V. H. Collins (Longmans, Green, 10s. 6d.). Against illogical thinking and imprecise expression this book declares war. If you say 'The factory is closing down for a week' can you justify your inclusion of *down*? Do you realize that the use of *credo*, when all you mean is *creed*, is an affectation of the sham-erudite? Do you realize that a couple implies two, and that it is therefore nonsense to write: 'His name, coupled with those of four others, ensures efficiency in the committee'? The phrase *take place*, as a synonym for *occur*, should be used only when there is a reference to place. Thus, 'The test match took place at the Oval' is right, but 'A change has taken place in his opinions' is wrong.

Do you say 'They are both the same price', and if so, can you justify *both*, for how could one be the same price if the other was not? The gypsies appeared in this country in the sixteenth century and were wrongly supposed to have come from Egypt; hence the form *gypsies*. Did you know that *went*, which we borrowed for the past tense of *go* is the past tense of *wend* and is connected with *wind*?

Well, you know now.

WAX AND WANE

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

A Word Carved on a Sill, by John Wain (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 10s. 6d.).
Poems, 1948-54, by Wrey Gardiner (Peter Russell, 8s. 6d.).
Poems, by Fredegond Shove (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.).

In this first generally available collection of John Wain's poems there are flashes of true poetry and rare, searching lines to convey the assurance that the writer has not completely mistaken his medium. Many lines, however, are slick, slangy and abrupt, or too clever, such as:

> You say you know this too? Come off it, boy.
> See how their love packs down to keep them hot.

Maybe the reasons are two-fold; first, the tendency to a journalistic iconoclasm, a dabbling in half-truths, as in the typical lines:

> To moderns who devoutly hymn the land.
> So be it, each is welcome to his voice;
> They are a gentle, if a useless, band.

And second, the fondness for *terza rima* and adapted villanelle patterns that really need delicacy and elegance of motive and technique.

Nevertheless there is much that has insight, dignity and compassion, and much that holds promise if Mr. Wain will forget the snappy phrase that has vogue only for the moment and the easy, disillusioned attack; and above all, if he will pour his poetry into more ranging, less end-stopped, aphoristic moulds, giving us such perceptive lines as those in memory of the porter of his old college:

> Grim, he hung a frown on his face like
> a watch on his wrist, but his mien was a mask;
> he smiled at ease with his eyes, his word was a jest;
> like a bright brass knocker he guarded the gate for his bread.
> No one was glad when the grim good man lay dead.

In the thirty-six poems, written between 1948 to 1954, which Wrey Gardiner has collected into a limited edition of three hundred and fifty copies there is an undertone of the poet's own nostalgic disappointment. He stands aside from life as if searching for silence and solitude like a man watching a stream of beauty that has passed through gorges of trial, flowing one knows not whence:

> Looking into the gap between love and self,
> Between the echo of the lost past and the sunset.

There is a falling cadence in an elegiac tracery of words redeemed from despair by a plea for love and its final sacrament of truth.

How different is the note struck by the poems published as a memorial to Fredegond Shove, who died in Cambridge in 1949 after a long, happy married life of academic detachment. Here there is the confidence and delight of an assured, conventional religious faith; fluent, joyous and objective. All nature yields confirmation and protects from subjective searching: the poetry is in the praise:

> Bury my sorrow,
> Bury my shadow and my false likeness in the brook;
> Give me to-morrow.

'NO TEPID DON'

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

Dylan Thomas, by Henry Treece (Second edition, revised and reset, Benn, 15s.).

Dylan Thomas: A Bibliography, by J. Alexander Rolph. Foreword by Dame Edith Sitwell (Dent, 45s.).

It would round out an already excellent analysis by Henry Treece, now re-issued in an up-to-death edition, if further printings could incorporate Dylan Thomas's introduction to one of his American lecture-readings published this July by that same enterprising transatlantic magazine which also gave, embedded between the latest in trousseaux and the earliest in dewy cosmetics, the first intimations of *Under Milk Wood* to its college girl-readers – a dog among the fairies indeed, but with a shroud already ordered by Atropos. In this sparkling preamble, every line of which is quotable, Thomas declared: 'I am no tepid don smelling of water biscuits'; a crystallization of his own panache brighter than most, but claiming no immortal diamonds.

In her foreword to Mr. Rolph's *Bibliography*, Dame Edith Sitwell states: 'Poetry is, to some degree, the etheric body of the poet . . . ' and follows on with an affectionate description of Dylan Thomas's physical and social characteristics, designed, no doubt, to counteract the *succès de scandale* clutched at by other, opportunist, writers attendant upon his obsequies.

Since the etheric must feed upon the physical although it may survive it, we can already recognize a transmuted wine – and without biscuits – to be the ichor in process of fermentation. Death has driven in the bung and Time alone can mature the contents of the barrel. Other palates than ours, conditioned by other syntaxes, will pronounce the final verdict when the lees have settled. And when the little foxes, grimacing over sour grapes have mouldered and the brown sherry voice lingers in no remembering core save that of the record-player, what then?

'You won't ask me questions afterwards, will you? I don't mind answering a bit, only I can't . . . I can only cough and stammer . . . ' So echoes the voice. No use then to ask 'Are you a genius?' or to recall Freud's explosion: 'Geniuses are unbearable people!' Time alone knows the answer, and what Time finds unbearable he silently scythes whether it has been loved by the gods or no.

Henry Treece's name for the living Thomas was 'scallywag' – a dedicated scamp, 'spoken to from elsewhere, made to utter', and he discusses with the special acuity of a poet, the forces at work, among which he finds medievalism, surrealism and the compulsion of 'the race of words and lines' inherited from Manley Hopkins. Comparing Hopkins with Thomas, he concludes that the goal is probably the same, though the gait is different. One might extend this trope to include the Trainers – God in the one case and 'Man, my metaphor' in the other.

The creative artist is humble only before his chosen gods, of which his own ethos, however metamorphosed, is the chief; and for Dylan Thomas this ruling Man-metaphor begins with the primal male potency flowing through the poetic womb to his own loins; the inevitable force that

through the green fuse drives the flower. And in the driving, its impact on our language caused words to flower as images and images to proliferate with clash and colour beyond the temperate academic landscape. Before his gods, his exuberant senses never pretended to the fig-leaf of metaphysics, though he did produce what Treece calls 'straight' poems ('The Hand That Signed,' 'Hunchback in the Park,' 'Death Shall Have No Dominion') in which Mr. Treece notes a tendency to reach for it.

A most valuable aid to the mechanics of Dylan Thomas's survival is the *Bibliography* compiled by J. Alexander Rolph. It presents clearly tabulated particulars of everything Thomas ever wrote, broadcast, recorded or translated. It is very well worth the price, not only to collectors and librarians but to anyone trying to trace contributions to journals, which range from the Swansea School Magazine to the Botteghe Oscure. The illustrations are mostly of first editions and title-pages, but there are three good pictures of the poet, one of which is the quite unpretentious letter addressed to the bibliographer.

We shall do well to add these books to our Dylan Thomas shelf and, because of them, more of his writings. Our own understanding will be widened and perhaps our automaton-fed descendants may bless us for a flashback into the prodigal life of the senses, overspilling uneconomically into poetry; perhaps not. We cannot postulate for posterity, we can but cough and stammer.

POLITE AND IMPOLITE

NOTES BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

(The inclusion of a new work in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review)

'We need all kinds of verse, polite and impolite, religious elegy, epithalamium, and drinking song. We have come much closer to inanity in our poetry through a sentimental and genteel tradition than its opposite could ever bring about . . . I am hinting at something dangerous – that we should be able to look around us and write about what we see.'

Thus speaks James K. Baxter in a book of 'notes on modern poetry' which comes from New Zealand with *The Fire and the Anvil* as its title. Mr. Baxter is a poet and critic who has lectured at Victoria University College, Wellington, and his book expresses a literary outlook which should interest readers over here – it can be had at the Cambridge University Press (7s. 6d.). Other lectures lately printed are *A. E. Housman* by Ian Scott-Kilvert, a British Council publication (Longmans Green, 2s.) and *The Simplicity of Racine* by the Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, Sir Maurice Bowra (Clarendon Press, 2s. 6d.).

But we must keep separate our home 'products' from those which have come across the world, so let us return to the Antipodes and give a welcome to six new books published by Angus and Robertson, an Australian house which has also a London address – 105 Great Russell Street. We salute this firm for their courage, taste, and enthusiasm: each book is beautifully produced, and four of the six are works of poetry by Australian authors – *The Two Fires* and *Woman to Man*, by Judith Wright, *Orpheus and other Poems*, by Harold Stewart, and *Three Men and Sydney*, by Nancy Keesing. Each is priced at 15s.,

and they are so representative that we hope to write at length about them later.

The prose-works received from the same publishers are *The Sonnet in Australasia*, an anthological 'survey and selection' by Louis Lavater (21s.) and *Laughter not for a Cage*, by Miles Franklin (21s.), a survey of Australian writing with emphasis on the novel in three half-centuries. A critical study, this time of poetry with analyses of work by T. E. Hulme, John Crowe Ransom, Max Eastman and others, has been published by the Minnesota Press, in U.S.A. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, 32s.) – *The New Apologists for Poetry*, by Murray Krieger. This is an important book, searching and profound.

'From Rimbaud down to Mr. Ashbery, an important school of modern poets has been concerned with the discovery that, in childhood largely, in dreams and daydreams entirely, the imaginative life of the human individual stubbornly continues to live by the old magical notions.' We quote from W. H. Auden's introduction to John Ashbery's first book, included in the Yale Series of Young Poets (Geoffrey Cumberlege, 20s.). Obligingly he explains the subject of one poem as 'a woman who acts out her private mythology and denies the reality of anything outside herself: that is to say, she is insane. As a ritual sacrificial act she jumps off a high building.' Thanks for the warning, Mr. Auden.

We are now dealing with the latest publications from America, and it is with interest that the following, contemporaneous with John Ashbery's, are tabulated: *Through a Jade and Turquoise Sea*, by Ruth S. Dancer (Exposition Press, New York, 2.50 dollars); *Joy*, by Minas C. Petrides (Comet Press Books, New York, 2 dollars); *An American Takes a Walk*, by Reed Whittemore (Univ. of Minnesota; Cumberlege, London, 22s.); *A World of Saints*, by Thomas Cole (Editions Imagi, Baltimore, 2.50 dollars); *Behold the City*, by Garth Bentley (Wings Press, Mill Valley, California, 2.50 dollars); and *The Great Walker*, by MacKinley Helm (Stanford University: Cumberlege, 32s.) the story in poetic drama of a Franciscan friar more than 200 years ago – Juniper Serra. The author describes his work as a 'Symphonic Biography.'

In our list of new publications this quarter there are fewer books than usual, and more than the average number of booklets. Among the former there is *The Journey*, by John Hoffman (Guild Press, 7s. 6d.), an autobiographical fragment and 'an idyll of love', from which a single line may be quoted to indicate its passionate nature: 'The winds have told your name the whole night long.' Passionate, but always written in homage. *Aurora* (Favil Press, 10s. 6d.) bears an honoured name on the title-page – John Evelyn, one which, three centuries ago, was the name of a famous diarist. This is Mr. Evelyn's seventh book – we remember especially his early *Aena and other Poems* and *Pandora*.

Millicent Wedmore also has published a number of books previous to *From a Cornish Moor* (J. Stevenson, Beaminster, 5s.), a deeply reverent collection which includes several brief poems and a lengthy one entitled 'The Poet'. The dedication is to the memory of Princess Jeanne Lambrino of Rumania 'with golden thoughts of the reading of French poems . . . one April afternoon seen from the terrace of the Sacre-Coeur.' *Selected Poems* by Thomas Edwin Earth (Poetry Publications, 3s. 6d.) is admirably written and admirably produced. We doubt, though, if much space is saved by squeezing the first

four lines of 'Sorrow' into the foot of a page and continuing the remainder over two and a half pages. The lay-out of poetry is important. The printer of *Preludes and other Poems*, by James Hurd (Christopher Johnson, 10s. 6d.), avoids this sacrifice of dignity and *look*. *Disturbing Wings*, by 'Penumbra' (G. Watson), also has pleasant-looking pages (Moray Press, Edinburgh, unpriced).

Wallace Nichols, a mature poet of 'authentic stuff', as one critic has it, heads the booklets with *Ode in the Atomic Age* (Worden Ltd., 3s. 6d.). *Morning, Noon, and Night,* a sequence of ten poems by C. H. O. Scaife, comes from the American Press, Bayrut, also unpriced. Peter Russell as publisher sends *The Cape of Good Hope*, by Edwin Morgan (Pound Press, 5s.), and from the Guild Press we have received *The Filigree Bridge*, by Marjorie Battcock, and *The Glory of the Year*, by C. B. Toosey (3s. 6d. each). Our list is completed with *Poems*, by Brian Louis Pearce, published by himself at Swan House, Hotwell Road, Bristol (5s.); *Seven to Seventeen*, by Patricia Norman (Stockwell, 2s.); *Sonnets of the Ancient Teaching*, by Reginald Winder, published privately at 137 Swan Court, Chelsea; and *Hugh Latimer*, by E. K. Ellis, the Seatonian Prize Poem for 1955, (Cambridge University Press, 1s. 6d.), another publication to which we hope to return.

From the same university publishers we have *Le Regard d'Orphée*, an inaugural lecture in French by J. B. Barrère (3s. 6d.). Other books and booklets by poets in various languages are *The Centre*, by R. de Loyola Furtado (Cromlech Press, Pembroke, 6s.) – in English: *Awakened Daffodil*, by Olga Papastamos, translated from the Greek (Office Français d'Informations Culturelles, Paris), and *Yo Conocia Algo Hace Tiempo*, by Ernesto Gutierrez. Another translation into English verse is *The Anacreonta*, by P. M. Pope (Bowes and Bowes, 10s. 6d.), reminding us that Goethe once paid tribute to the poet Anacreon in 'Anakreons Grab,' an immortal poem set to immortal music by Hugo Wolf.

AUTUMN EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

'The Battle for Beauty is Never Finally Won'

Here is a list of Programmes for Friday evenings, 6.30 to 7.30. Members 1s., Non-Members 2s. (Members, bring a non-Member!)

September	14	Walter de la Mare Memorial Reading. LORD DUNSANY, KELTY MACLEOD, JOYCE GRENFELL, RICHARD CHURCH. Chairman: The President, THOMAS MOULT.
	21	'Poets in Exile'. Arranged by the International P.E.N. Chairman: PAUL TABORI.
	28	'Oranges and Lemons'. A London Anthology, with KELTY MACLEOD and ROBERT BRIDGER.
October	5	SIR EUGEN MILLINGTON-DRAKE. Chairman: CONSTANCE MACCOLL.
	12	Irish Poets of To-day. A Reading arranged by EDWARD HAZELTON. Chairman: TOM FOLEY.
	19	Tales Told in Verse, with NATALIE MOYA, FRANK DUNCAN, GEREK SJCHELDERUP.
	26	INDIVIDUAL VOICES (Poets in Person). A Reading arranged by DANNIE ABSE.
November	2	Thomas Hardy. An Illustrated Talk by WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR, with MARY GILES.
	9	Russian Poetry. An illustrated Talk by JACK LINDSAY, with ALAN PHILLIPS and KIM CORCORAN, including Mr Lindsay's own translations. Chairman: THE PRESIDENT.
	16	Dramatic Scenes from Shakespeare, with WILTON COLE and CHARLES DORAN.
	23	'Voices of Youth'. EVELYN D. BANGAY. Chairman: JOHN GRADDON.
	30	'A Poem all around me'. A Talk on Kathleen Raine by J. M. PURSER, M.A., with JUNE FRANKLIN and PAMELA CORSIE.
December	7	Audience Night. Members of the audience are invited to read their own or favourite poem. (Limit, three minutes). Chairman: ROBERT ARMSTRONG.
	14	F. PRATT GREEN. 'The Magic Touch in Poetry'. Chairman: STEPHEN GRAHAM.

The next Gold Medal Examination will be held at 33 Portman Square on Tuesday, 27th November, 7 p.m.

COMPETITIONS FOR EVERYBODY— PRIZES WORTH THE WINNING

I – *New and Unique*

THE GEOFFREY TANKARD CONTEST

Poets who are acquainted with Music will welcome our latest Competition. A distinguished Professor of Music who is also a Poet and a Friend of Poetry offers

TEN POUNDS

to be awarded for Poems about Music. The principal award is Five Pounds. No poem is to exceed thirty lines, and one poem only may be submitted by any one competitor. The manuscript must be neatly typewritten and, bearing the author's name and address, posted not later than 31st January, 1957, to The Poetry Society (Geoffrey Tankard Contest), 33 Portman Square, London W.1.

II – *A Famous Annual*

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1956–57

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of

TWENTY POUNDS

as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed 'The Greenwood Prize', 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1957.

III – *Members and Subscribers only*

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION 29

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed 'Premium Competition', *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize money will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st Dec., 1956.

Latest Prize Reports and Awards

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT No. 28

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

Of the forty-one entries two-thirds qualified at a first glance for further consideration, and of these about a score could be called good or very good – a high and most encouraging proportion and one reflecting credit on the Society's influence. After much reading and pondering I selected five which aroused specially favourable responses as meeting my requirements in a poem: they were 'The Stirring Year' by Hilary Glyn; 'From the Olive Grove, Cyprus' by A. R. Kendall (one of two 'Cyprus' poems); 'The Hare's Form' by Celia Randall; 'Fear' by Alice Yardley; and 'City of God' by Frances Porteous.

These poems have imagination, thought, form, and a blessed directness of statement, though not one of them resembles the others in sense of pattern. The Cyprus poem greatly impressed me for its cool classicism in every line and the strong mastering idea behind it. 'The Hare's Form took me by its earthy quality and the conjuring of an eerie effect by the judicious use of Lowland Scots. I applauded the close-knit thought in 'Fear' and its impeccable lyric form; while 'City of God' moved me by its ambitious measure in irregular ode form, though I could wish the rhyme pattern had been more arbitrary, to exclude unrhymed line endings. I hesitated long in my selection of a poem to join 'The Stirring Year' for my final choice, at last settling on 'From the Olive Grove'. The decision between these two was extremely difficult, but I have no doubt that I am right in awarding the Premium Prize to Hilary Glyn for 'The Stirring Year', a poem beautifully expressing the duality of life in the universal pattern. The runners-up are A. R. Kendall, Celia Randall, Alice Yardley and Frances Porteous, in that order.

Highly commended are Rita Spurr (Hampstead), Marian E. Moeller (Butler, Pennsylvania), Muriel Woodward (Nottingham), Walter Lorimer (Burton-on-Trent), Patricia Howson (Preston), Ronald Avon (Merton Park), Alexander Sloan (Greenock), Margaret Ormiston (S.W.7), Olive Culshaw (Ashton-on-Ribble), and Dorothy S. Howard (Sheffield) for the one humorous entry, which might well prompt the offer of a prize for a new Ballade, Double Ballade or Chant Royal.

Others commended are Malcolm H. Tattersall (East Dean), L. E. Craigie (Armidale, N.S.W.), Beatrice Mayor (London), Irene Cavenaugh (Salisbury), Enid Madoc-Jones (Old Colwyn), Helen Crichton (Edinburgh), Alice Fleming (London), J. Phoenice (Berwick-on-Tweed), Mabel Parker (Winsford), Margaret Lees (Altrincham) and Margaret S. Fidler (Edgbaston).

THE STIRRING YEAR

HILARY GLYN

Two swallows, chattering, swoop below the eaves,
and sterile winter leaves,
the moist grey dawn is filled at once with promise
of summer's long-lit evening and the fullness
of the rich loaded blossom and the burdened sheaves,
all the wild blaze
of copper and vermilion in fruitful autumn.
Starlings, exultant in the stirring year's first warmness,
crowd in the thickened twigs, whose purple haze
shadows the woods. Each creature in its fashion,
by instinct cruel or beautiful, mating in season,
renewing life's rhythm.

In the strange duality of all things living
comes Spring's uprising.
Each being seeks its complement; not sameness,
nor obverse only. No red and green, together colourless.
Polarity's unrest is not the whole, nor yet the fusing
of elements which lose themselves;
nor shadow-play of light and dark, mere alternation.
The living pattern comprehends all these; the wholeness
leaps beyond the parts, as words from letters, and resolves
all inequality – unlikes cannot compare. Left knows the heart,
right leads by consent. By variance completed, as eyes, set apart,
find a new dimension.

In this same universal pattern
were set man and woman,
but not for them the order of creation,
changeless. In each race and generation
the same instincts and needs, the kaleidoscope shaken,
form a new design,
with every phase of thought and faith again respun.
This puzzling, wounding freedom and shifting relation,
setting each man and woman together to divine
the heart of the maze and the true balance
and the meaning, from the beginning, of the ordinance
that the two shall be one.

REPORT ON THE ALBERT RALPH KORN QUATRAIN CONTEST 1956

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

There were 150 competitors, and roughly double that number of quatrains were submitted. A few either did not know or ignored the meaning of the term, although this was briefly but clearly defined in the announcement. Others, apparently reared on the more amorphous kinds of modern verse, had the vaguest notions of definite metre and stanzaic pattern.

Of the remainder, about fifty sent in really good work, not only original in theme but sound in technique. This ranged from the airily cynical to the savagely satirical, from the philosophic and sententious to the lyrical and elegiac. The difficulty of deciding lay most of all in the difference in kind. In the final lap there was very little indeed between the winner and the runners-up. These ran her to a 'photo-finish':

Miss Gwyneth M. F. Tait (The First Word), Mrs. Cora Warburton Hussa, U.S.A. (Eternal Patience), Miss A. V. Stuart (Shadows of Light), Miss Eva Dobell (The Optimist), Mrs. Jean S. Cox, Australia (Lachesis), Mrs. Celia Randall (A Children's Tomb), Mr. Stanton A. Coblentz, U.S.A. (The Human Brain), Mr. Kenneth Hare (How Cruel are the Gods), and Miss Jane Scott Parsons (To Euterpe).

The prize of fifteen pounds is awarded to Margaret Hope (Miss Margaret Hope Wicksteed) 4 London Street, Edinburgh 3, for 'Woolgathering'. Though severer critics might carp at the slight redundancy, piece-remnants, this quatrain combines various excellences exhibited only in part by its close rivals. The subject is deeply human; the point of its apparent nonchalance is profound; the versification is formal yet flexible, disciplined but easy; the rhymes are unhackneyed, and the verbal twist

Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore

Edited by CLAUDE COLLEER ABBOTT

It is believed that this volume contains all the letters written by Hopkins that have come to light, other than those printed elsewhere. A volume of *Further Letters* was first published in 1938. Since then a considerable store of new material has been collected, including a large number of family letters (found in 1952) written by Hopkins mainly to his mother, and covering most years of his life. Second edition. *Illustrated* 50*s. net*

Also edited: *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges* and *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, two volumes. 50*s. net*

The Poetical Works of John Keats

Edited by H. W. GARROD

This new edition, entirely reset, of the whole body of Keats's poetry replaces that edited by H. Buxton Forman which has been reprinted many times since its first appearance in 1908. (*Oxford Standard Authors*) 10*s.* 6*d. net*

The True Mistery of the Nativity

BY JAMES KIRKUP

Adapted and translated from the French Medieval Mistery Cycle of Arnoul and Simon Gréban. James Kirkup has taken a fifteenth-century French original and rendered it in verse that preserves the medieval spirit and yet rings true as living English. Broadcast by the B.B.C., it is suitable for widespread presentation. *Paper cover* 5*s. net*

Early Irish Lyrics

Eighth to Twelfth Century

Edited with translation, notes and glossary by GERARD MURPHY

This anthology of 58 Irish lyrics – both monastic and secular – will interest not only serious students of Old Irish but also poetry-lovers in general, not all of whom are fully aware of the richness of Irish lyric tradition. 42*s. net*

Uncertainties and Other Poems

BY JOHN PRESS

This first volume of poems by a writer who, in his essay *The Fire and The Fountain*, has shown such a deep knowledge of the poets and such catholic understanding of the nature of poetry, will be read with particular interest. 10*s.* 6*d. net*

William Blake's 'Vala'

Blake's Numbered Text

Edited by H. M. MARGOLIOUTH

Blake numbered the lines of each 'Night' of *Vala*, but later made many changes and added about 900 lines of new material. Some additions are in a different idiom; their content also breaks the unity of the poem. This edition is of Blake's original numbered text and it presents the coherent poem which *Vala* originally was. *Illustrated* 42*s. net*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

from wool to fleece is both adroit and symbolically suggestive. Technical ability here, it was felt, passes into poetry.

WOOLGATHERING

MARGARET HOPE

'Wool-gathering!' the teacher thinks, and raps
Upon her desk: while slowly, piece by piece,
Young Susan goes on gathering, perhaps
The scattered remnants of the Golden Fleece.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT COMPETITION

The result of this Competition, along with the key to the "Last Lines," will be published in our next issue, January–March, 1957. The number of entries has been remarkable, and the utmost care is being taken by the Adjudicators – and, we may add, the Statisticians, who are required to deal with the 283 solutions possible for each entry!

Results of the Howard Parsons Sonnet Competition, 1955-56, Mendip Prize Competition Number Two and The Oriole Contest, will also be announced in our next number. For the 'Which? and Why?' result see page 250, this issue.

PORTMAN SQUARE – IT'S FRIDAY!

To continue from where we paused for breath in mid-May, we resume with two well-known members, Lesley Deane and Alun Llewellyn, reading poetry, and a poet, John Smith, talking about it. Mr. Smith achieved the near-impossible by discussing his own work and how it came to him, without mock modesty or any other affectation, thus earning our gratitude as well as our interest. Kelty MacLeod was an ideal reader in this context.

A week later that gifted teacher and adjudicator, Mollie Hudson, showed, not only that she practises what she teaches but, together with Bess Jones, gave one of the best explorations in modern poetry we have heard for some time, avoiding the cross-word poem but reminding us too that a new tradition has grown up since the war – by which we do not mean the Boer.

A great welcome awaited J. G. Wilson ('Mr. Bumpus') on 15th June. After declaring that he was 'too old to write papers', he held us in a spell of timeless magic from which we were loth to wake. Margaret Rawlings's evening followed so closely on the passing of Walter de la Mare that a full programme of homage needed time for arrangement, but she gave us some poignant moments with his work and that of other poets, reflecting the sadness in our hearts.

Constance MacColl (a chairman we must inveigle again) on the following Friday introduced Kennedy Williamson with his thorough chivvying of the Verb, forrard, midships and abaft the poetic argosy – which may make some of us a trifle more careful about shipshapeliness before leaving port in future. The 'Any Questions' team of July 6th included Dallas Kenmare, F. Pratt Green of the Editorial Board, Alun Llewellyn and William Kean Seymour. Messrs. Pratt Green and Llewellyn enlivened the proceedings considerably with wit and daring, while Miss Kenmare gave expert evidence on the Browning love-life and Mr. Seymour plumped for Tradition to help a poet into long trousers. The spate of nautical metaphor above will indicate that your reporter's thoughts were already turning seaward and there was one truant from the closing Audience Night which our spies indicate wound up this year of increasingly interesting talk by interesting people with a splendidly suitable chairman – Charles Doran, The Man Behind the Meetings to whom we owe much.

K.V.R.

"Yes"—thank goodness *yes!*—"the novel tells a story", and here it is told by a poet, the poet who wrote this:—

But tell the lapwing, tell the gull,
this charmed
World is a fancy. Say they are beguiled
By a soft blue mist; that from this
dusk, this child,
Shall grow the dawn, when every beast
goes armed
And man and earth no more are
reconciled.

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WHICH? AND WHY?

THE WINNING ANSWERS

If you were stranded and alone on a desert island, or if you had a premonition that you were going to be, which one Poem in English literature would you be glad to know by heart? And if you are going to a party, knowing that you may be called upon suddenly to read a great Narrative Poem aloud, which will you choose?

So we asked in our Competition Pages – April-June issue – and here are some of our readers' replies, restricted in the invitation to fifty words. The range of their selections is interesting: especially as the patronage does not extend to any of the fashionable verse-writers of the moment.

MILTON AND ALFRED NOYES

Alone on a Desert Island, I would rejoice in the companionship of Lycidas.

'In Memoriam', a source of help in grief in the past, is too long to be memorized; 'Lycidas', known by heart from childhood, holds the riches, the beauty, the strength and the comfort I should need.

Many of the great Narrative Poems – 'The Ancient Mariner', 'The White Ship', and even 'The Revenge' – are too long. I would choose 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes – with the galloping movement of its rhythm, its drama, its pathos, its heroism, and an economy of words in which each word tells.

SILVIA TATHAM

GRAY AND KEATS

I would have by heart Gray's 'Elegy'. It holds tranquillity for depression, music and imagery for enjoyment, excuse for failure; and for reading aloud, Keats's 'Eve of St. Agnes', because its fine character contrast and weaving of revelry, romance, suspense, and gentle sensuality are the true stuff of good narrative.

OLIVE CULSHAW

NOT FORGETTING 'OMAR'

My desert-island companion would be Fitzgerald's 'Omar Khayyam'. It contains wit, philosophy and lyrical beauty, and is long enough to prevent me from growing bored. For my party piece I choose 'Sohrab and Rustum' – though it needs an Olivier to do justice to its dramatic story and histrionic possibilities.

PAMELA MELNIKOFF

CHAUCER AND HERBERT

'Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,' by George Herbert, has served me before as a talisman when the world seemed desert; and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* would permit me to draw all the other guests into the reading, allotting them parts as pilgrims!

RUTH PARTINGTON

FLECKER AND KIPLING

My Desert Island Poem must be *short* (the agony of forgetting lines when many leagues from reference-books!) – short and *sweet:* repetition must not stale it. So: 'A Ship, an Isle, and a Sickle Moon', by James Elroy Flecker.

For the Narrative Poem I choose Rudyard Kipling's 'Song of Diego Valdez'. It might be unfamiliar to the audience, and is a splendid poem, not long enough to bore the Philistine.

ANNE PATTERSON

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A LAST SALUTE FROM THE CENTRES

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

A last salute and heartfelt words of gratitude – these have come from the Centres since the news reached them that Walter de la Mare has made his last farewell to the world of Poetry. Many personal expressions conveying a deep personal sense of loss have been received by the Editorial Board, and although many of the tributes to Mr. de la Mare's remarkable kindness and consistent encouragement to young poets would be worth quoting in this column – he was a great enthusiast for The Poetry Society in recent years – none of the tributes would be complete without the poem to which it usually refers. Space forbids our reproducing them, and we have only room for a few characteristic tributes which will be found in our Memorial pages. Some of the verses we cannot include have been received from Miss Rita Spurr and Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens of the Walton and Weybridge Centre. We mention them here because like all the rest these two friends of Poetry – their names are familiar to our readers – can never forget the generosity shown to them, however long ago, by the author of *The Listeners and other Poems* and the score of volumes which followed its publication nearly fifty years since.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

A welcome visitor to the Walton and Weybridge Centre, of which Mrs. Gittens is the secretarial inspiration, has been an American poet from Syracuse, Mr. A. E. Johnson, who, reading his own work both serious and humorous, impressed everyone in what was 'a full house in spite of a shockingly wet evening.' Also from the U.S.A., the poet's sister and a friend were present, and Miss Patricia Bate and Mr. Roger Collis, a Liverpool University student, enhanced the proceedings with readings of their own verse.

At the previous month's gathering, Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* was read by members, including Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. George, Mr. and Mrs. L. Best, Miss Dorothy C. Bond, and Mr. John Gittens. The address for enquirers is 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge.

BURGESS HILL

The autumn session of this well-established Sussex Centre began on 8th September at the Red Cross Depot, Station Road, where the monthly gatherings – on the second Saturday at three o'clock – are being held. Mr. G. W. M. Boycott, 'Twemlow,' Janes Lane, Burgess Hill, announces that talks on modern poetry (Mr. Sourbutts), Charlotte Mew (Mr. and Mrs. Squire), and a reading of *Murder in the Cathedral* are featured in the syllabus. Mr. Kennedy Williamson will lecture on 8th December.

SUFFOLK

When the announcement of the result of the second Poetry Prize competition to commemorate George Crabbe, the eighteenth-century East Anglian poet, was received by our East Anglian members, it gave them a very special satisfaction. The winner is Mr. F. H. A. Engleheart, their chairman, for his poem, 'The Empty Grave.'

Again the competition was a success, reports Miss Kay Turner, the Hon. Secretary (1 Willoughby Road, Ipswich). Entries came from New Zealand, Australia, and – yes, Alaska! Eight members of the Suffolk Centre competed, and a runner-up, Mr. G. Chase, has been one since its formation. The judges were Mr. Jack Lindsay, Mr. Kennedy Williamson, and Mr. James Turner, and the presentation will probably be made in October.

The Centre's May meeting was held at Mr. Engleheart's home, Stoke Priory, Stoke-by-Nayland. 'A beautiful day lent enchantment to a beautiful garden' – so we are informed in the report. 'Pitfalls – for Would-be Writers' was the title of a

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talk by Mr. Engleheart and after 'a sumptuous tea', as the report goes on, 'the members took the bus home, fired by new enthusiasms, minus the pitfalls.' In June Mr. Kennedy Williamson gave an interesting talk on 'Assonance in Poetry', and Sir Charles Tennyson welcomed the July gathering at his home in Southwold – a return visit – with a talk and reading from *Idylls of the King* and other poems by his illustrious grandfather.

HAMPSTEAD

Stevie Smith reading her own poems, Kennedy Williamson lecturing on the Epithet, and Stuart Holroyd lecturing on 'Major Themes in Modern Poetry' with readings – these and several equally enjoyable members' evenings comprised the Spring and Summer programmes at this North-West London Centre (Mrs. Angela Malleson, 10 Gayton Crescent, N.W.3). Mrs. Malleson is confident that 'the faithful few who have attended with admirable regularity so far' will be increased in numbers during the new season, beginning with an evening devoted to the work of Walter de la Mare.

NORTHERN IRELAND

What an attractive programme of monthly readings and talks has been arranged by this Belfast Centre, so admirably administered by Miss Hettie Haddock! Moore's melodies and poems were recited at the opening meeting in September, and a poetry and song recital by Percy French follows on 15th October. Professor Spencer, of Queen's University, will address members in November and Miss Haddock has arranged a programme of sacred poetry and music for December. Miss Haddock's address as Secretary is 18 Ashley Gardens, Belfast.

Note – For Directory of Centres see previous issues.

POETS' PROGRESS

THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Forty-seventh Annual General Business Meeting of The Poetry Society was held at 33 Portman Square on the 23rd May, 1956.

The President, Mr. Thomas Moult, opened the proceedings with a welcome to the Members, and conveyed apologies for absence from Miss Margaret Rawlings, Mrs. Malleson, and Mr. Edward Hazelton (Northern Ireland).

The Honorary Treasurer submitted the Balance Sheet and the Accounts for 1955, together with the report of the General Council, which stated that after making all the necessary provisions there was a net surplus for the year which amounted to £105 6s. 5d. The balance of the Accumulated Fund at the 31st December, 1955, was £2,963 6s. 2d.

Examining the accounts in detail he made particular reference to the small but welcome increase in membership, and the continuing expansion of auditions. Although the budget had been balanced for the third year in succession prices in every direction continue to rise and the Society was particularly affected by the increase in postal charges. Various questions were asked and answered, and during the discussion Mr. Pratt Green made a moving appeal for the question of Bequests to the Society to be borne in mind, and Mr. William Kean Seymour stressed the importance of members entering into covenants and so saving the Society income-tax.

After the discussion the adoption of the accounts was formally moved by Mr. Vivien Burbury who expressed thanks and appreciation to the President and the Honorary Treasurer for their efforts on behalf of the Society, and said that their names should be added to that of Mr. Thomas Weston Ramsey for the work that he had done prior to his death. Mr. Charles Doran seconded the motion that the accounts be accepted, and it was carried unanimously.

John Cowper Powys

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The Honorary Treasurer spoke of the valuable services rendered to the Society by Messrs. Godwin & Taylor, the Auditors, and formally moved their re-appointment. This was seconded by Mr. Vivien Burbury and carried unanimously.

The President began his Address by congratulating everybody 'on our emerging with a certain degree of triumph from what has been an unusually difficult year'. In spite of further increases in the cost of working The Poetry Society has again balanced the Accounts on the right side.

For this, he said, we must give especial thanks to the Hon. Treasurer, and he paid a warm tribute to Mr. Graddon's 'truly wonderful' work. 'I say deliberately that there would have been no Poetry Society by now but for his strong endeavour and the loyal effort of those men and women who are gathered around him.' To Mrs. Graddon, the General Secretary and Registrar, supported by a loyal staff, Mr. Moult's appreciation went also. 'I count us fortunate indeed in having two such grand people as Mr. and Mrs. Graddon working here in double harness.'

The President emphasized the remarkable development of the Verse-Speaking Examinations, and he spoke with enthusiasm about the new-style *Voice of Youth*. Let us always remember, he added, that propaganda (not profit-making) is one of the Society's dominant aims, and our 'junior quarterly' is helping splendidly to introduce the Society to a generation of young people. The Friday Readings, he went on, have become more successful than ever with Mr. Charles Doran as Chairman of the Readings Committee. Just recently the syllabus of speakers and readers at the Friday Poetry Hour gatherings outrivals any (if any) comparative list elsewhere. To cope with this increased attractiveness, as well as because of tenancy obligations, much money has been expended on the renovation of the premises at headquarters.

Crowning these domestic improvements a memorable gift has been gratefully accepted from one of our distinguished artist-members, Mr. John Strevens – two beautiful paintings in memory of his late wife. The Society is grateful, too, for Mrs. Kathleen Richardson's reorganization of the 10,000 volumes in the Library – 'a winter-long labour of love'. Many other names were included in the President's expression of thanks for work during the year, and he concluded by declaring that he looked forward with ever-increasing confidence to our tackling the many outstanding problems, one of them concerned with the Centres, to which the Executive Council have given earnest consideration already. 'If we face our difficulties with undiminished enthusiasm and devotion the labours of the General Council, their Executive and the Society's workers and friends, are certain to be rewarded as happily as they have been during the past year.'

Following the President's address, Mr. John Graddon spoke of the vast volume of work which was carried out by the President, and that in every activity of the Society his presence and his work were an inspiration to all. He expressed to the Pesident the thanks of the Society for his magnificent leadership during 1955 and this was supported by Mr. Robert Armstrong, the motion being received with acclamation.

There were seventeen nominations for the General Council, which last year consisted of sixteen members. It was proposed by Mrs. Van den Bergh and seconded by Miss Constance MacColl that the General Council this year should consist of seventeen members; in this case there would be no election. An amendment was proposed by Mr. Vivien Burbury and seconded by Miss Hellier that the General Council this year should consist of fifteen members. The amendment was put to the meeting and lost.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried and the seventeen nominated members thus elected to the General Council. Their names are printed inside the front cover of each number.

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